

**BOARD OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES**

Guidelines for Preparing Thesis/Research Project

1. General Thesis Layout/Format

- i) Thesis is written in English (UK).
- ii) All chapters should begin on a new page.
- iii) Within a chapter, the presentation of sub-sections must be continuous.
- iv) Partially filled textual pages are acceptable only if followed by non-textual pages such as those presenting tables and illustrations.
- v) Whenever the heading of a section or sub-section appears near the bottom of a page, it must be followed by at least one complete line of text, or the heading should be forced to the top of the next page.
- vi) Detailed organization of the text varies among academic disciplines. However, the formatting of the text must be consistent throughout.
 - a) Pagination: Bottom centred
 - b) Margins: 1.00" (2.54 cm) right, left, top and bottom
 - c) Minimum requirement of 20,000 and 50,000 words for Masters and PhD theses respectively.
 - d) List of candidate's publications to appear as an appendix
 - e) Legends/Titles: Tables – top; Figures - bottom
 - f) Chapter headings must be bold capitals (upper case) and centred.
 - g) Sub-section headings must be bold sentence case
 - h) All text must be in Times New Roman font size 12
 - i) The spacing should be 1.5
 - j) The first line in a new paragraph must be indented 5 spaces.

Research theses contain different features dictated by their mother disciplines. The differences give them discipline peculiarities. However, there are common salient features across all academic disciplines. These include: -

- i) The preliminaries
- ii) The main text
- iii) The references
- iv) Appendices

Each of these has its unique components viz.

I THE PRELIMINARIES

These preliminaries include:

- a) The cover - black or grey in colour.
- b) Spine - candidates surname and initials, the abbreviation for the degree. Writings from top of spine to bottom.
- c) The title page
- d) Declaration and recommendation page.
- e) Copy right – page
- f) Dedication page (optional)
- g) Acknowledgements
- h) Abstract
- i) Table of contents
- j) Lists of figures, tables, plates, abbreviations and acronyms.

II THE MAIN TEXT:

A candidate will choose any of the following thesis structure from the two options.

A. Option 1- Monograph

The main text is composed of:

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

- a) Background information
- b) Statement of the problem
- c) Objectives
- d) Hypotheses/Research Questions
- e) Justification/Significance of the Study
- f) Scope/Limitations.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

- a) Literature review
- b) Theoretical framework

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY/MATERIALS AND METHODS

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Sometimes combined as Results and Discussion

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

REFERENCES

APPENDICES.

B. Option 2- Paper Format

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

General introduction same as option 1.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

General literature review covering the entire thesis. It should be similar to that of research proposal.

CHAPTER THREE, FOUR, FIVE...

According to objectives/topics/experiments or papers. Each consisting of:

- a) Abstract
- b) Introduction
- c) Materials and methods /Methodology
- d) Results and Discussion (or separately)
- e) Conclusion
- f) References relevant to that chapter only.

Under this option repetitions of literature review **must** be avoided and if this is not possible, the thesis must be written as under option 1. Similarly, references **must not** be repeated in the list of references for individual chapters or else the list of references should be consolidated.

CHAPTER SIX: GENERAL DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

REFERENCES

Referencing format: American Psychological Association (APA) system. References section consists only of references cited in the text.

APPENDICES

These consists of questionnaires, transcriptions, copy of research permit, key data analysis outputs, relevant raw data, abstracts of candidate's relevant publications.

2. Suggested Thesis Outline

The outline should be adopted and if modified to suit individual academic disciplines must be approved by the Board of Postgraduate Studies

General thesis outline consist of:

TITLE PAGE:

- i) This should bear the title of the thesis in capital letters followed below by the full names of the student.
- ii) The title should be short, precise, concise and clear. It should relate to the subject matter of the thesis. It should also be captivating.
- iii) This is followed by the following citation in title case: "**A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the ... (Name of the degree) ... Degree in ... (Name of the Discipline)... of Egerton University**" in the middle of the cover page.
- iv) Finally, Egerton University, the month and the year of presentation should be included in capital letters at the bottom of the cover page.

DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION:

This page consists of declaration by the student and recommendation by the supervisor(s) accompanied by original and appropriate signatures and dates.

Declaration

In which the author candidate/student swears that the proposal is original and has not been presented before.

“This thesis is my original work and has not been presented in this university or any other for the award of a degree”

Recommendation

This is where the supervisor(s) declare that the proposal has been presented with their approval.

“This thesis has been submitted with our approval as University supervisors”

COPYRIGHT

This is a statement by the candidate that no part of the thesis may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, photocopying, scanning, recording or otherwise, without the permission of the author or Egerton University.

DEDICATION

Candidates' recognition of inspirational individuals to their achievement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgment of all those who participated in one way or another to enable one complete the thesis successfully. Institutions should be acknowledged before individuals.

ABSTRACT

- i) A single page
- ii) A block paragraph and should comprise the following:
 - a) Background to the problem/motivation for the study
 - b) Objectives
 - c) Essential methods/materials and methods
 - d) Results (should be quantitative)
 - e) General conclusion and recommendation (take-home message)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- i) This is a synopsis of the structural pattern of the thesis
- ii) It contains all major sections i.e. chapter level headings. If the report is long, sub-headings may be included
- iii) The headings as listed in the table must be worded exactly as they appear in the body of the report
- iv) The wording and presentation (i.e. capitalisation, use of special fonts and characters) for all entries in the table of contents must match exactly with the text.
- v) All entries must have a corresponding page number with leader dots or dashes connecting the entry to the page number.

LIST OF FIGURES

- i) If the thesis contains a lot of figures, a separate page should be devoted to the list of figures specifying the title and the page where figures can be found in the thesis.
- ii) Figures include graphs, photographic illustrations, maps, and drawings.
- iii) The list of figure should be separate from the table of contents and should come immediately after the table of contents

- iv) All entries must contain a corresponding page number with lead dots or dashes connecting the entry to the page number

LIST OF PLATES

In some disciplines this is separated from the list of figures and it is governed by the same rules as the list of figures.

LIST OF TABLES

List of table is governed by the same rules as the list of figures

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS/ SYMBOLS

All abbreviations, acronyms and symbols in the thesis should be listed on this page and their full interpretations, and the units where appropriate given.

Pagination of all the above should be in lower case Roman numerals.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The introduction of the thesis should be brief and clear.

- i) It should give the reader an insight into the whole work, thereby acting as a summary of the same.
- ii) It comes before the Literature Review and hence exposes views of other authorities in the subject. In a nutshell, it portrays the relevant aspects of the thesis such as the problem and significance of the study.
- iii) It consists of :

1.1 Background to the study

- i) This is what culminates into the scholar's curiosity to study the subject
- ii) The section describes the nature of the problem and current state of knowledge in the research area
- iii) A well-laid down context of the background to the study brings up a sound understanding of the research topic.

1.2 Statement of the problem

- i) This is the nerve-centre of any research work, which should be adequately comprehended by the researcher at the onset.
- ii) The problem must be clearly and conspicuously stated in just one paragraph.
- iii) It should be clearly focused, without unnecessary preambles and ambiguity.

1.3 Objectives

This section should have clear stipulated general and specific objectives.

1.3.1 General/Broad Objective/Aim

- i) This is the aim, goal or purpose of a given research.
- ii) A generic statement describing what the study intended to achieve in broad terms.
- iii) Should be closely related to the title of the research and statement of the problem.
- iv) It provides the intellectual scope of research work.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

- i) Specific objectives should be focused on the research problem in order to yield relevant data.
- ii) Should be SMART (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic & **T**ime-bound)
- iii) They should be stated in measurable terms and in such a way that they align with the hypotheses and/or research questions.

1.4 Research Questions/Hypotheses

A candidate chooses either research questions or hypotheses but not both.

- i) Like specific objectives, properly structured and implemented research questions yield useful and relevant data
- ii) The questions should, therefore, be structured to bring out the clarity and the relevance of what the researcher aims to achieve. Long and complicated questions should be avoided.
- iii) The questions should properly relate to the objectives of the study.
- iv) A hypothesis is a guiding principle to an argument that culminates into valid and reliable conclusion.
- v) The number of hypotheses is determined by the number of specific objectives the study investigated.
- vi) In the pure or applied sciences, the hypothesis should be measurable and testable in the final stages.

1.5 Justification of the study

- i) Research being expensive in both in terms of money and time, it is imperative that its relevance is established at the onset in order to save the researcher unnecessary expenses.
- ii) One should prove that the research findings would be beneficial to the targeted consumers besides making a contribution to the existing knowledge.

1.6 Assumptions/ Scope and Limitations (optional)

In social sciences, hypotheses are difficult to measure; hence principle of assumption subject to confirmation through research becomes crucial.

- i) This is a review of the extent the research has taken. It is pegged on the geographical and intellectual area of study, the time taken, the resources used and the research design.
- ii) It justifies what, when and why the work was done as expressed.
- iii) It portrays the established results under the given circumstances.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Terms which are used in the text and are not obvious should be defined.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

- i) This is a selective and critical survey of the written works of the subject area. It includes personal communication, articles, books, published and unpublished papers (thesis only), literature from newspapers and unpublished works should be limited.
- ii) It is a critical analysis of the selected works that reveal what has already been researched on exhaustively and the missing links that need to be filled through further research.
- iii) It provides background information, which jump-starts the research exercise.
- iv) The literature review should clearly show gaps and/or directions for further research.
- v) Above all, it buttresses the researcher's statement of the problem by revealing that the area of study is untouched / identifies the gaps
- vi) Literature review should demonstrate logical flow of argument – tell a story.
- vii) References cited here must contain the name of the author(s) and year of publication
- viii) American Psychological Association (APA) referencing style is used in

citation. However special consideration is given to pure and applied science disciplines where *et al.* is used for more than two authors.

- ix) *In-narrative citation*: Nyalala (2019) observed that.....According to Kitaka and Nyalala (2019)..... The results concur with Kitaka *et al.* (2019)
- x) *Parenthetical citation*: single author (Nyalala, 2019); two authors (Nyalala and Kitaka, 2019); many authors (Nyalala *et al.*, 2019).
- xi) Multiple citations should be arranged chronologically and separated by semi-colons.
- xii) Literature review is also useful in providing the theoretical framework(s) that subsequently conceptualizes the fieldwork results.

Literature review is a must, and should be exhaustive, thorough, critical, informative and current. Plagiarism MUST be avoided when reviewing literature.

Theoretical Framework/Conceptual Frame Work (Optional)

- i) This contains theories that exist on tackling a given research problem.
- ii) In establishing a suitable theoretical framework, the researcher should consider both out-dated and modern theories, reveal the merits, demerits and limitations of each.
- iii) The researcher should then choose either one whole already established framework, or a modification of one or several frameworks for solving the research problem at hand.
- iv) The choice of the framework should be convincingly justified. A clear plan or contemplation on how to steer the work should be shown here.
- v) This section is important because it relates and co-ordinates the literature review, the problem, the significance of the study and the objectives to the applied methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY/MATERIALS AND METHODS

- i) This is the procedure used in eliciting data from the field of study.
- ii) The section should provide detailed information necessary to repeat the research and verify the results.
- iii) It needs to describe accurately, chronologically, clearly and logically how the research was designed, conducted and analysed.

- iv) Methodology/materials and methods section includes: description of study location, research design, sample population, research instruments, data collection and analysis.
- v) This section should be well written in order to justify the validity and reliability of the study.

All materials, which do not easily fit into the mainstream of the thesis write-up but are relevant to the work as a whole, should be retained as appendices either after or before the bibliography.

CHAPTER FOUR RESULTS

Results are presented in this chapter as texts and tables or charts. The results are reported in texts and readers referred to respective tables or figures presenting the statistical data. Tables or figures should be inserted immediately they are mentioned in the text. Sometimes the results are combined with discussion. In this case, the results presented in a paragraph are discussed before proceeding to the next paragraph.

CHAPTER FIVE DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the results are interpreted and compared with previous studies. Discussion of the results must therefore be supported with current literature.

CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions must be precise, numbered and linked to the specific objectives without dragging in results and discussion. Recommendations must be based on the results and objectives of the study.

REFERENCES

- i) This contains the list of all references cited in the text.
- ii) Listed alphabetically in terms of the author(s) using hanging format without space between references and APA referencing style throughout.