

How to present your Thesis

A practical guide to requirements in form and style



Graduate Research School
Research and Innovation

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1	Latin Abbreviations vs. Short Form in Citation Notes	12
Physical Arrangement	2	Formatting of References	13
Page Set-Up	2	Footnotes and Endnotes	13
Arrangement of Material	2	Bibliography and List of References	13
Page Numbering	2	Treatment of Page Numbers in Citations	13
Word Count	2	English Expression	14
Formatting Issues	4	Grammar Issues	14
General Text	4	Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers	14
Type Size and Appearance	4	Passive and Active Voice	14
Line and Paragraph Spacing	4	Tense	14
Paragraph Alignment	4	Punctuation	15
Italicising, Underlining and Bolding	4	Full Stop	15
Headings and Display Text	5	Semicolon	15
Type size and appearance	5	Colon	15
Line Spacing	5	Apostrophe	15
Capitalisation Style	5	Hyphens and dashes	16
Alignment	5	Comma	16
Contents List Entries	6	Ethics	16
Headers and Footers	6	Submitting the Thesis	17
Quoted matter	6	Examples	18
Epigraphs	6	Example of a Title Page	18
Run-in or Set-off Quotations	6	Example of a Table of Contents Page	19
Punctuation of Quoted Matter	7	Example of a List of Appendices Page	20
Changes from Original Quotation	7		
Figures and Tables	8		
Appearance	8		
Figures	8		
Tables	8		
Placement	9		
Labelling Figures and Tables	9		
Figures	9		
Tables	9		
Notes to Figures and Tables	10		
Tables	10		
Citing Sources	10		
Systems of Documentation	10		
The Author-Date System	11		
The Documentary Note System	11		
Other Systems of Documentation	11		
Footnotes and Endnotes	12		

Introduction

Most research candidates would probably be surprised at the number of theses returned for revision ('deferred') by examiners simply because their authors did not respect the basic conventions of document presentation and written expression. Unless your thesis meets the required standard in both these areas, it will not be passed—however brilliant the content.

This guide explores the common aspects of layout, format and expression that will require your attention during the preparation of your thesis or exegesis and works. Although it concentrates on thesis presentation, the advice given is also relevant to similar aspects of portfolio and research paper presentation. The guide does not address any issues concerning the research and development of intellectual content or discipline specific practices. These aspects of the journey sit firmly with the Supervisory Team.

Therefore, all instructions in this guide are offered as general advice only. For more specific advice, candidates should consult the current style manual and dictionary recommended for use in their discipline. If they are unaware of these aspects, then the supervisory panel may be able assist. Candidates should also take care to determine whether their Research Centre; Institute and/or supervisors and examiners have any special requirements regarding the presentation of the finished thesis. It is important to note that there is no one "right" way to present a Federation Thesis.

Finally, it is the responsibility of all candidates to ensure that the thesis complies with the requirements of Federation University, the Graduate Research School and the appropriate procedures and guidelines ([found here](#)) with regard to thesis and portfolio presentation. Relevant excerpts of this regulation are reproduced at the end of this guide for reference.

PLEASE NOTE: The advice in this booklet should not override the supervisors, your selected style guide/manuals, or your entities (School; Institute, Research Centre; etc.) directions.

The GRS recommend that candidates ask their supervisor to recommend a successful examined Federation thesis, from their discipline, that the candidate might use as a guide with relation to presentation of their thesis/exegesis. Because there is no one single layout for a thesis/exegesis, the GRS do not provide any templates in this regard.

Physical Arrangement

Page Set-Up

- The thesis or exegesis & folio components will normally be formatted on A4 international standard paper with mirrored margins set to inside at 3.18 cm and outside to 2.54 cm
- All headings, text, figures and tables should remain within margins.

Arrangement of Material

The material to be included in the thesis should be arranged within the following sections:

- Preliminary pages: All material necessary to prepare the reader for the main text to come by giving information relating to its physical contents and background.
- Main text: The main body of the thesis divided into chapters.
- End matter: All reference material that supports or adds to the reader's understanding of the main text.

Sample pages of the various sections above can be found at the Examples section of this booklet.

Page Numbering

- There are two distinct sequences of pagination:
- The preliminary pages should be numbered in a single sequence (beginning with the title page) using lower-case roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv...);
- The main text and end matter should be numbered in a single sequence (beginning with the first page of the main text and continuing through to the final page of the end matter) using Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4...).

Although all pages are assigned a page number, it is conventional for the page number not to be shown on the title page, any display or blank pages, or on the pages appearing before the table of contents.

Word Count

A Doctoral Degree (PhD) thesis will **normally be: a text of not more than 100,000 words** reporting original scholarship and research carried out by the candidate under supervision, or a major work or collection of works, including but not restricted to visual presentation, literary production or computer software development, carried out by the candidate under supervision and accompanied by an exegesis or scholarly commentary of between 20,000 and 40,000 words.

A Master of Philosophy Degree (MPhil) **will normally be: a text of not more than 50,000 words** reporting original scholarship and research carried out by the candidate under supervision, or • a major work or collection of works, including but not restricted to visual presentation, literary production or computer software development, carried out by the candidate under supervision and accompanied by an exegesis or scholarly commentary of between 10,000 and 20,000 words.

Please note: *the thesis word counts do not include appendices or references.*

PRELIMINARY PAGES	
Title Page	Required. See Sample Title Page (See Examples section)
Abstract	Required. A summary of thesis (Not more than 2 A4 pages in length).
Acknowledgements	Optional. An opportunity to acknowledge those who supported you. If you received support from RTP or other sources they should be noted here.
Signed Declaration	Required. To be signed and dated by candidate
Copyright Statement	Optional
Table of Contents	Required. List sections, chapters and main headings, and give opening page numbers.
Table of Figures	Include figure numbers, captions and page numbers. Do not include references or links.
Table of Tables	Include table numbers, titles and page numbers. Do not include references or links.
Table of Appendices	Optional. List of all appendices
Jointly Published	Optional. Statement of contribution to any jointly published papers included
Statement of Ethics Approval	Optional. If your research required approval from an ethics committee, a signed approval statement from the relevant committee will need to be included.
Dedication	Optional. Do not exceed more than a few words.
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	A statement about how you have used in your research (if used)
List of Abbreviations	Optional. Include only those abbreviations that are likely to be unknown to the reader, or abbreviations devised for use in the thesis. If the list is lengthy, this information may be better presented in a glossary in the end matter section.
MAIN TEXT	
Main chapters	Can be numbered or just given titles. The chapters, their order and their usual content will differ depending on the subject or discipline of the thesis.
END MATTER	
Appendices	<p>Information supporting or supplementing the text, e.g., sample questionnaires, informed consent forms.</p> <p>Each appendix should be given a descriptive title and a brief explanation of its purpose. Each Appendix or the page that the appendices section starts on should be included in the table of contents. Information in an appendices should be supplemental and not required reading to understand the body of the text.</p>

Glossary	<p>Include only those technical or foreign words or terms unlikely to be known by the reader.</p> <p>Arrange items alphabetically, giving their definition (and translation, if appropriate).</p> <p>The Glossary may be placed with the end matter or in the preliminary section. If the glossary contains only a few entries, it may be better placed in the preliminary section.</p>
References/ Bibliography	<p>Required here may differ according to the style guide being used. Please consult the most recent version of your chosen style guide for directions.</p>

Formatting Issues

A lengthy and complex document such as a thesis should be formatted in a way that will support close and concentrated reading. When you are making formatting decisions, it is important to focus on producing a document that is easy on the eye, logical in design and consistent in presentation.

General Text

Type Size and Appearance

The preferred typescripts are Times New Roman 12, Arial 11 or Calibri 12 or another font of similar size and appearance.

Line and Paragraph Spacing

Pages may be printed on one or both sides (recommend using both sides for very large theses that may otherwise need to go over volumes). Line spacing should be set to 1.5 (if using Harvard style) or double (if using APA style). Theses submission should ordinarily be made in PDF format unless approval is sought from the Graduate Research School before submission. Spacing between paragraphs may be determined by how new paragraphs are signalled: if the first line of each paragraph is indented, there is no need for extra space between paragraphs because the indentation acts as a visual separator; however, if block paragraphing is used, a space between paragraphs is needed to avoid the paragraphs running together. Do not mix the two methods.

Paragraph Alignment

Although documents may look 'neater' with fully justified text, ragged-right alignment is thought to be easier to read (particularly in text-dense documents). Ragged-right alignment also reduces the gaps between words and end-of-line hyphenation that can occur with fully justified text. Fully justified text may change text spacing that is required for particular styles, such as APA.

Italicising, Underlining and Bolding

Italic type should be reserved for the following: titles of books, journals, plays, films, television programs; foreign words and phrases; genera, species and varieties; the first use of a new, technical, or key term or label; letters, words or phrases cited as linguistic examples; and letters used as statistical symbols or algebraic variables.

Do not use italics for common foreign phrases and abbreviations ('et al.', 'per se', 'ad lib.') or for emphasis (unless it is done very sparingly). Underlining and bolding of type should be avoided in general text.

Headings and Display Text

The design of chapter headings, main headings and subheadings will depend on personal preference and any established conventions in your discipline or chosen referencing style.

Remember that headings and subheadings act as signposts for the reader, so use logic when planning their wording and structure, and use common sense design principles when deciding on their appearance. Once formatting decisions have been made, apply that formatting consistently and correctly to each heading rank so that the readers can identify where they are with confidence.

Type size and appearance

Type size can be an obvious and effective indicator of a heading's rank but be prepared to prune or reword headings if using a large type size. (Overly long headings are not a good practice, in any case, regardless of size restrictions.)

Typeface should be chosen with the aim of producing a professional-looking document. A sans serif typeface for headings looks crisp and can create an effective contrast to serif body text. Boldface type can also be used to effect but be careful with underlining. Too much is visually distracting.

Line Spacing

Always have more space above a heading (or subheading) than below it, in order to connect it visually to the text it heads. **Headings should not appear alone or with less than two lines of text at the bottom of a page.** (Most word processing programs do this by default by enforcing 'widow/orphan control' in paragraph and heading formatting styles.)

Capitalisation Style

When making design choices for headings, you will need to decide on a capitalisation style. The three main styles of capitalisation are:

- **Headline (or title) style**, which gives an initial capital to all words except prepositions and conjunctions:
Anxiety Ailments Suffered by Students at Federation University Australia and the University of Melbourne.
- **Sentence style**, which gives an initial capital to the first word in the heading (and subheading) and any proper nouns:
Anxiety ailments suffered by students at Federation University Australia and the University of Melbourne.
- **Full capitalisation**, which capitalises every letter in every word:
- **ANXIETY AILMENTS SUFFERED BY STUDENTS AT FEDERATION UNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA AND THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE.**

It is quite acceptable to use a different capitalisation style for different ranks of heading (e.g., Heading A: full capitalisation, Heading B: sentence style, etc.), but do not change capitalisation style within a heading rank. APA style, for example, makes the requirements for various headings explicit.

Alignment

Headings can be left-aligned, centred or indented depending on personal preference or discipline-specific convention.

Contents List Entries

Entries in the table of contents, list of figures and list of tables may differ in *appearance* to the corresponding headings in the main text; however, they should match exactly the *wording* of the corresponding text headings. Entries should show the beginning page numbers only. Page numbers are normally set with a right-aligned tab stop, with optional leader dots. Ensure that the heading text does not run right up to the page number. It can be a good idea to regularly generate an ‘evolving’ table of contents as you write and use it to test the following as you proceed:

- Do the headings and subheadings follow in a logical sequence?
- Are the headings in each heading level of equal rank?
- Does the heading wording give a clear indication of what is to come?
- Is the wording parallel in structure?
- Are there any ‘missing’ headings?

Headers and Footers

The information displayed in headers and footers should be formatted differently from the body text so that the reader does not mistake it for body text. Acceptable ways of doing this are capitalising (full or initial capitals), italicising, bolding, or using a smaller type size or font. The information displayed in the header/footer should be limited to page numbers and—if acceptable in your discipline—chapter titles. The headers and footers of display pages, blank pages, and any pages appearing before the table of contents should be empty, as should the header of the opening page of a chapter.

Quoted matter

Accuracy is paramount when transcribing quoted matter. Take care to preserve the exact spelling, punctuation, and paragraphing of the original, and always give credit to those you are quoting directly or through paraphrase. Be aware that in special circumstances you may also be required to obtain permission from the author (or owner of the copyright or literary rights) to use the quoted or republished matter. It is wise to avoid using too much quoted matter. Quotes should be used to support your argument, not establish it. The Tunitin iAuthenticate tool may also assist with citations, accuracy and quoting.

Epigraphs

An epigraph is a quotation or saying used to open a section or chapter of a book and to point to its theme. Epigraphs are set off from the general text and do not require surrounding quotation marks. This may also be given a typeface that differs from the typeface used elsewhere. The source is placed below the epigraph.

The surest way to make a monkey of a man is to quote him.

Robert Benchley

Run-in or Set-off Quotations

The length of the quoted matter will determine whether it is run-in (integrated into the text) or set-off (set apart from the rest of the text).

Run-in quoted matter should be surrounded by quotation marks and set in the same typeface and type size as the body text.

- Roberts (2003, p. 21) refers to it as “structuration gone mad”, but his bias is well known.

Set-off quoted matter—also known as block quotations, excerpts, or extracts—should be set in the same typeface as the body text but with one or two points smaller in size. It should be indented on the left side

(and right side, if desired) to distinguish it from the body text. Paragraphing should follow that of the original. Surrounding quotation marks are not required.

This is the body text. This is the body text.

This is an example of set-off quotation. This is an example of set-off quotation.

This is the body text. This is the body text.

Different style guides may give different advice as to how long quoted matter should be before it is set-off (ranging from over forty or more words). If you are not constrained by a particular style guide, the determining factor should be the look and readability of your page or the style guide you adopt. It is probably kinder to your reader to set off any quoted matter that is longer than four lines.

Punctuation of Quoted Matter

The punctuation of quoted material differs according to the style being followed. The traditional English/Australian style places full stops and commas inside the quotation marks only if they are part of the quoted matter.

Style guides also differ in advice about whether to use single or double quotation marks. Some styles recommend using single quote marks (with double quote marks for quotes within quotes), while others recommend using double quote marks (with single quote marks within). Consult your chosen style guide for specific advice. If you have not chosen a style, then please consult your supervisor.

Changes from Original Quotation

Occasionally, quoted material may require a correction, explanation, or amplification in order for it to be understood correctly, as in the following cases:

- **Omission:** If words or sentences have been omitted from quoted matter, insert an ellipsis (three dots) at the point of omission. (Ellipsis points are generally not used at the beginning or end of a set-off quotation.)
'The belief...has been held for some time.'
- **Addition or alteration:** If you need to add or alter something in the quoted matter, place the added or altered material within square brackets. (This should be practised judiciously: do it only when the quotation may be unclear or misleading to the reader without your insertion.)
'It was only when he [John Howard] heard about it, that action was taken.'
- **Apparent mistake:** If the quoted matter has an obvious error, insert the word 'sic' (Latin for thus/this way) in square brackets next to the mistake to indicate that it was present in the original (and not made by you).
'The Eureka Rebellion of 1763 [sic] was a turning point in Australian history.'
- **Emphasis:** If you wish to draw attention to certain words within quoted matter, emphasis can be added with italics; however, you must make it clear to the reader that it is your emphasis (not the quoted writer's) by adding an insertion.
'The man entered the house through a window on the *southern* side [emphasis added].'

Figures and Tables

Any text contained in a figure or table should be included in the word count. Figures and tables should serve to supplement—not duplicate—the text. Discuss the tables and figures in sufficient detail in the general text to demonstrate their reason for inclusion, but do not repeat all information that is readily available there. In the text, refer to all tables as *tables* and to all graphs, pictures, charts, photographs, drawings, diagrams, or maps as *figures*.

All text references to tables and figures should include the table or figure number (e.g., ‘The results of this experiment can be seen in Table 3’; ‘A map of the area can be seen in Figure 6.2. Do not write: ‘The results of this experiment are given in the table below’ or ‘A map of the area can be seen on the next page’ because directions such as these might not remain appropriate with changes to the text.

Note: Because formatting of tables and figures is very time-consuming, it is wise to commence preparing them within the constraints of your final page margins but leave the final formatting until after you have finished writing the text.

Additions or deletions to the text could result in a table or figure needing changes to its contents, location or even inclusion, and if you have already spent time assuming incorrectly that it will fit within a particular space, you will have wasted valuable time.

Appearance

Figures

If you are creating the figures yourself, ensure they are as visually crisp and consistent in design as you can make them. Typeface and size can be different from the body text but try to maintain some consistency with all figures throughout.

If you are creating your own graphs, consider using shading instead of colour, and make sure all axes are clearly marked. If you have obtained your figures from another source, and thus have no control over their design, concentrate on correct and consistent placement and labelling. If the figure or table has been copied, then appropriate citing of the original author/s is required.

Tables

There are no hard and fast rules here. Your aim should be to produce clear, clean tables. The typeface does not need to be the same as the body text; in fact, a sans serif typeface (such as Arial or Calibri) will probably give a cleaner look. It is better to avoid bold type, although this can be used in the column headings. The type size can be different from the body text, but recommend you not use anything smaller than 8 point or larger than 14 point.

The correct alignment of data within table columns will depend on the type of data contained in the table and the specific requirements of the subject area. Generally, all whole figures should be right-aligned, and all decimals should be aligned to the decimal point. Specific advice will be found in your chosen style guide.

Note: Avoid using the space bar to align data within tables; even though it may look fine on the screen, in all likelihood the printed version will be a mess. Use tabs or paragraph alignment in this case.

Too many rules in a table can be distracting, and most are actually unnecessary. All vertical rules (not requirement in APA) and many horizontal rules can usually be left out of a table without altering readability. An effective technique is to use *less* space between rows of related information, and *more* space between rows of unrelated information. Once again, different subject areas will have different conventions regarding rules, so consult a style manual in your discipline.

Placement

The figure or table must fit within the text area. Do not go outside the page margins. Try to insert it as close as possible to the paragraph where it is first mentioned. Figures and tables are usually centred horizontally on the page. However, in some special cases, figures and tables may be inserted into a paragraph and surrounded by text.

If a table or figure is bigger than one page (in total), try one of the following solutions:

- Run it over two pages, making sure you repeat the heading row.
- Change page set-up to 'landscape' (make sure the title is also re-oriented).
- Use a larger page, folded and bound as a normal page.

Do not split a figure or table over two pages if it is less than one page in total. Instead, carry over to the next page—as long as you do not leave more than a third of a page of white space, or resize it to fit.

Labelling Figures and Tables

Labelling of figures and tables needs to be self-explanatory and should not require a context to understand what it represents. The size and appearance of type used for figure captions and table titles is often prescribed by the style guide in use. If this is not the case then the size should be similar to the body text size, although the typeface can be different. Bolding of titles is an effective treatment. Whatever you decide on, use the same formatting throughout.

Figures

Figures should be numbered consecutively throughout the document using Arabic numbers preceded by the word 'Figure' (or 'Fig'). If you wish to use a separate sequence in each chapter, make sure you include the chapter number as well (e.g., Figure 4.2 or Figure 4-2) so that each figure has a unique number to avoid confusion.

The caption of the figure is followed by the legend—a brief explanation of the figure, which can follow on directly from the figure caption or be placed below it. The figure caption is positioned *below* the figure, either centred or set flush left against the figure edge. Figure caption may be capitalised headline or sentence style, while legends are generally capitalised in sentence style.

Figure 3 [*number*]. The Author's Desk [*caption*]. Left to right: Phone, lamp, blotter [*legend*]

Tables

Tables should be numbered consecutively throughout the document in one sequence, using Arabic numerals preceded by the word 'Table'. If you wish to use a separate sequence for each chapter, make sure you use the chapter number as well (e.g., Table 5.7 or table 5-7) to avoid confusion. The table number is followed by the title, which briefly identifies the table. This label is positioned *above* the table.

Table 8. [*number*] Analysis of Variance for Classical Conditioning [*title*]

The table caption can run on directly from the number or be placed on the line below. Do not use a full stop at the end of the table number unless it is followed on the same row by the caption. Labels for tables can be set either flush left with the edge of the table or centred. However, check your style guide for its instructions in this regard.

Notes to Figures and Tables

Figures require a note in the form of a credit line if they are taken from, or are largely based on, other sources. This is a brief statement giving information about the source and/or copyright permission. Notes to figures are placed underneath the caption or legend.

Tables

Tables often require a note (or notes) to credit a source or to explain or amplify data included in the table. Notes to tables are placed flush left, directly below the table. They can be listed one below the other or run on (separated by full stops), but one method should be used consistently throughout. The main types of table notes and their conventional order of appearance follow:

- Source notes: These are used when the table has been introduced without change from another source and are introduced by the word 'Source' (or 'Sources') followed by a colon:

Source: Adapted from "Fussy Lions," by Brian B. Brown, *Lion Gastronomy* 12, 8.

- General notes: These relate to the table as a whole and are introduced by the word 'Note' followed by a colon:

Note: This table is a summary of three experiments.

- Specific notes: These refer to a specific column, row, or entry and are introduced by a superscript lowercase letter, number, or symbol:

^dSparky suffered from a tooth abscess during the first round of feeding.

- Probability notes: These are used when a table contains values for which levels of probability (p values) are given. A single asterisk is used for the lowest level of probability, two for the next highest, and so on:

* $p \leq 0.05$. ** $p \leq 0.001$

Citing Sources

Systems of Documentation

In the process of completing your research, you will have relied on a variety of primary (and possibly secondary) sources. These sources must be identified (at the relevant point in your text) and credited by supplying complete and accurate bibliographic details. Every direct quotation, all borrowed ideas and all adopted pre-existing statistical procedures must be credited in this way. If you fail to do this, you may be guilty of unethical behaviour, plagiarism and breach of copyright. To avoid this, keep detailed records of all your sources from the beginning (Federation University Australia strongly recommends the use of the reference database software *EndNote* for this purpose.)

How the citations are organised, what they contain, and how they are displayed will depend on the system of documentation being used and the particular formatting/style conventions being followed. There is no single correct system of documentation, although most disciplines will have a preference. Two of the most commonly used systems of documentation are the *author-date* system and the *documentary note* system but check with your supervisor for their preference and/or the style used in your field.

AUTHOR-DATE SYSTEM	DOCUMENTARY NOTE SYSTEM
Cites source to text <i>in text</i> , giving author surname and year of publication only.	Cites source to text in <i>footnotes</i> or <i>endnotes</i> , usually giving full bibliographical details.

Lists all cited sources in the <i>Reference list</i> . Entries contain full bibliographic details and are listed alphabetically by author surname.	Lists all cited sources in <i>Bibliography</i> . Entries contain full bibliographic details and are listed alphabetically by author surname.
Tends not to list background reading and suggestions for further reading in the reference list. Entries give full bibliographical details and are listed alphabetically by author surname.	May list background reading and suggestions for further reading in <i>Bibliography</i> .
Notes to text (footnotes and endnotes) contain <i>supplemental content</i> information only.	Notes to text (footnotes and endnotes) may contain <i>content</i> and <i>citation</i> information.

The Author-Date System

The author-date system identifies the source briefly (author surname and year of publication, and sometimes page numbers) at the relevant point in the text. Where there are several references to one work within a paragraph, it is not necessary to repeat the year of publication. Citations for different works within the same parentheses are normally listed alphabetically (sometimes chronologically) and separated by a semi-colon.

Bloggs and Cloggs (1922) showed that it was possible...

The subjects were interviewed using the standard technique (Garth & Grey, 1998)... Many studies (Anderson, 1996, 1998; Benson, 1988; Crisp, 1995, 2002) have reported...

These brief text citations act as pointers to the full bibliographic details given in an alphabetically arranged *References list* (also sometimes called *Literature Cited* or *List of References*) at the end of the document. Note that every entry in the References list must have appeared as a cited source in the text and, conversely, all in-text citations must be included in the reference list. If you do wish to list other works such as secondary sources or works you feel would be of further interest to your readers, these should appear in a separate list, headed *Bibliography*.

The author-date system is often preferred by those writing in the social sciences, commerce, education and a wide variety of other disciplines. This system is also known generically as the Harvard system. One of the most frequently used versions is that of the American Psychological Association (APA).

The Documentary Note System

The documentary note system, sometimes referred to as the *Oxford* system (and sometimes as the *Chicago* system, which can be misleading as there are two official Chicago systems), uses footnotes or endnotes to cite the source referred to in the text. If the full biographic details have been supplied in the footnotes or endnotes, it is not necessary, technically, to provide a separate list of cited sources, although it is conventional to provide one. This list is called a bibliography. In addition to the references cited in the text, the bibliography may include works that have supported the author's research, as well as suggestions for further reading. The bibliography can take the form of a straight alphabetical list of all cited sources, a list divided into categories, an annotated bibliography, or a bibliographic essay.

The documentary note system of source citation is often preferred by those writing in the fields of arts, history, and literature. Comprehensive information about this system is available within the *Chicago Manual of Style* (CMoS) as its notes and bibliography referencing system. The Australian government's style manual for authors, editors, and printers also contains information about this system along with information about other referencing systems.

Other Systems of Documentation

There are other frequently used systems of documentation in addition to the author-date (Harvard) and documentary note (Oxford) systems described above. One is the *Vancouver* system, which provides

sequentially ordered numbers in the text, usually superscripted, that are allocated to citations when they first appear. These numbers then refer to numerically ordered items within the reference list at the end of the document. This system tends to be used within medicine, disciplines that ally themselves with medicine (e.g., physiotherapy and podiatry), and the physical sciences. Another frequently used system is the *MLA* (of the US Modern Language Association). It is favoured in the humanities, particularly in literature and linguistics.

Footnotes and Endnotes

Footnotes and endnotes contain notes to the text. Depending on the information they contain, they can be classed as citation notes or content notes. *Citation* notes, which contain the bibliographical details of references cited in the text, are used in the documentary note system only. Citation notes do not contribute to the word count. *Content* notes (also known as substantive notes) contain any information necessary to supplement or explain the text and may be used in both the author-date system and the documentary note systems. Please note that substantive notes (those required to understand the main text) should be included as part of the word count for the thesis.

Notes to text are added by inserting a superscript character (usually an Arabic number) into the text at an appropriate point to stand as the note reference. The notes themselves are then displayed at the foot of the page (footnotes), or at the end of a chapter or section (endnotes), depending on preference. When deciding whether to use footnotes or endnotes, take into account the length of the individual notes and their total. If there are a large number of citation notes or a number of long individual content notes, it is preferable to use endnotes rather than footnotes. If, on the other hand, you have only a sprinkling of content notes throughout the work, it may be more helpful for the reader to use footnotes. Footnotes and endnotes should be numbered consecutively throughout each chapter, and a new sequence of numbering should begin with each new chapter.

If chapters have citation notes and content notes, you may combine the two into one sequence (footnotes or endnotes) or have two sequences (e.g., endnotes for citation notes, and footnotes for content notes). If you do have two sequences, it is probably less confusing for the reader if the endnotes are numbered and the footnotes use a sequence of symbols. Do not run two sequences for only one type of note.

Latin Abbreviations vs. Short Form in Citation Notes

Citation notes are often repetitive: the same work by the same author may be repeated many times. In such cases, instead of repeating the whole citation, it has been traditional in the documentary note system to use Latin abbreviations as space-savers; for example, 'ibid.' (*ibidem*, in the same place); 'op. cit.' (*opere citato*, in the work cited), and 'loc. cit.' (*loco citato*, in the place cited).

1. Barry B. Bloggs, *Psychological Problems in Retired Circus Monkeys* (Ballarat: Eureka Press, 2001), 406.
2. Ibid. [Repeats the exact immediately preceding reference.]
3. Ibid., 95. [Repeats the immediately preceding reference but with a different page reference.]
4. Harold H. Hunt, "One Loud Suit and No Respect", in *Circus Monkey Retirement Stories*, ed. James J. Jones (Melbourne: Wilson Press, 1982), 87.
5. Bloggs, op. cit., 24. [Repeats the reference cited in 1 but with a different page reference.]
6. Hunt, loc. cit. [Repeats the exact reference cited in 4.]

However, if the notes are lengthy and there are many references between the repeated entries for the author or work, it can be frustrating (and potentially confusing) for the reader to have to refer back to the first mention of the work in order to find the title. Because of this, the use of 'loc. cit.' and 'op. cit.' has largely been replaced by the use of the 'short form' (the author's last name and the title of the work) as a space-saver. If the title is longer than five words, it can be shortened for brevity, but make sure it is still identifiable.

1. Barry B. Bloggs, *Psychological Problems in Retired Circus Monkeys* (Ballarat: Eureka Press, 2001), 406.

2. Ibid. [Repeats the immediately preceding reference.]
3. Ibid., 95. [Repeats the immediately preceding reference but with a different page reference.]
4. Harold H. Hunt, "One Loud Suit and No Respect", in *Circus Monkey Retirement Stories*, ed. James J. Jones (Melbourne: Wilson Press, 1982), 87.
5. Bloggs, *Psychological Problems*, 24. [Repeats the reference cited in 1 but with a different page reference.]
6. Hunt, "One Loud Suit." [Repeats the exact reference cited in 4.]

Formatting of References

When you format your documentary sources, you need to decide on a particular 'style' to follow to ensure documentary consistency throughout your thesis. 'Style' refers to the way different types of citations (book titles, journal articles, personal communications, web pages, emails, visual media, etc.) and the elements within each citation (author, title, publisher, date and place of publication, etc.) are presented 'Style' also refers to the treatment of order of elements, punctuation, capitalisation, use of shortened or full forms, etc.)

What follows is general advice on aspects of formatting documentation, such as line and paragraph spacing and type size and appearance. For direction regarding specific aspects of formatting documentation, please refer to your chosen style manual. There are numerous guides available in print and online with specific and detailed advice on aspects of citations and their formatting. Use the one recommended to you by your supervisor and, as with all formatting throughout the thesis, apply the style conventions consistently. At the higher degree level, it is expected that the most recent version of the official style guide will be followed. For those unfamiliar with the variety of styles that might be used, the Federation guide to styles can be accessed from: [HERE](#)

Footnotes and Endnotes

Typeface for footnotes and endnotes should be the same as the body text. The type size should be two points less than the chosen body text type size (i.e., 9 or 10 pt). Paragraph formatting can be either first line indent or hanging indent. Note that because footnote and endnote entries are not arranged alphabetically, there is no need to place the surname before the given name.

Bibliography and List of References

Features will differ according to different style guides used; the important thing is to be consistent throughout in whichever style you use. Typeface size and appearance should be the same as the body text.

Entries in a reference list or a bibliography should be arranged alphabetically, with the surname preceding the given name. Works by the same author are arranged chronologically, earliest first, and then alphabetically by title. Works by a single author precede multi-author entries by the same author.

Consult your preferred style manual/guide for specific advice as to the treatment of initials versus full names, whether or not to invert only the first author's name, how many joint authors before you should use 'et al.', how to treat date and place of publication and publisher, which capitalisation style to use, and so on.

Treatment of Page Numbers in Citations

The use of 'p.' in front of the page number being cited is not necessary, although in APA and other styles it may be required. If there is more than one-page reference within a note, or if citing inclusive numbers, in certain styles 'pp' can precede the page number. Note that it is important to be consistent in every citation when using or not using 'p' or "pp". Mixing the approaches will confuse your reader, as well as look sloppy. This is an area to concentrate on when proofreading.

English Expression

The key to all successful writing lies in meeting the requirements of your audience. The audience for your thesis—your supervisor, peers and examiners—will expect an organised, coherent and well-presented record of your research. In order to deliver this, you will need to pay attention to your written expression and have respect for the tools of grammar, spelling and punctuation. Ensure your programs, such as Word, are set to use English (Australian) spelling and grammar. In general, we recommend avoiding the use of Americanised spelling unless it is a convention to use it in your field.

Be sure that your paragraphs are organised to help your argument along by building on what came before and preparing the reader for what comes next. A paragraph should contain only one developed idea. It is recommended to not repeat the same idea in different words within a sentence or paragraph, or in successive paragraphs. It is also important to watch the length of your paragraphs. If they run as long as a page they are too long. A paragraph break gives readers a chance to process what they have just read.

Avoid long, convoluted sentences; it is better to have two short clear sentences than one long and confusing one. If your readers need to re-read a sentence, they may be irritated rather than impressed. To keep your readers interested, vary the rhythm of your writing. Too many short sentences one after the other can irritate, while too many long sentences in a row may be tiring. Try reading your material aloud to pick up any problems in this area. This is also a good way to notice missing or misplaced punctuation.

Grammar Issues

Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers

Modifiers are words or phrases that *modify* (add to or restrict) the 'head' noun in a sentence. Problems arise when the modifier is *misplaced* (away from the noun it is modifying) resulting in ambiguity. Be particularly aware of falling into this trap when writing in the passive voice or when using long and complex sentences.

Modifiers can *dangle* when the noun they are meant to be modifying is assumed but not written, thus causing the noun that is there to be modified incorrectly— with ambiguous results. Misplaced and dangling modifiers can be avoided by always keeping the modifier close to the noun it is meant to be modifying.

Passive and Active Voice

Historically, the passive voice has been used in academic—particularly scientific—writing as a way of implying distance or impartiality on the part of the researcher. However, use of the passive voice can sometimes lead the careless writer to produce confusing and tortuous sentences containing an over-abundance of nominalisations and prepositions. While the use of passive voice is acceptable, aim for clarity above all else.

Tense

Depending on the mode of writing at the time (reporting, discussing, attributing or analysing) the tense required may change; however, interpretations of the 'correct' tense to use can vary between disciplines, so it is wise to consult your supervisor or style guide/manual for the accepted convention in your area of research.

In general, use the past tense when reporting something that happened entirely in the past, such as the *reporting* of methods, experiments and results, or specific past findings or statements.

The lions were each fed 3 kg of raw minced beef at two-hourly intervals. The lions gained weight during the summer months.

In their 1989 study, Bloggs and Cloggs reported that...

However, if part of what you are saying exists in the present (for example, a generally established fact or statement), you should use the present tense for that part:

In 1632, Galileo discovered that the earth orbits around the sun.

Also use the present tense when writing about something existing in the present, such as an analysis, interpretation, or conclusion of material under discussion. The reason for using the present tense here is that, even though what you are writing about happened in the past, your interpretation, analysis, or conclusion is taking place in the 'eternal' present.

In *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald presents Daisy as someone who is...

Punctuation

The purpose of punctuation is to make the meaning of a sentence clear by separating its elements. Correct use of punctuation, particularly commas, may make the difference between comprehensible and incomprehensible writing, especially when there are long and complex sentences involved.

Full Stop

Use a full stop at the end of a grammatically complete sentence. The following items do not end with a full stop: headings or display lines (unless text follows on the same line), table titles or figure captions (unless a legend follows on the same line), or items in a vertical list (unless grammatically complete sentences). The title of the thesis will usually not be a full sentence and, therefore, will not require a full stop.

Semicolon

A semicolon is used to separate two independent clauses of equal importance (connected in thought) that are not joined by a conjunction. Semicolons are also used to separate elements in a list or series that already contain commas, or where the elements themselves are long:

His thesis was nearly finished; he looked forward to the holiday his parents had promised him.

I can't stay much longer because I have to post the letters; buy the meat, bread, and vegetables; feed the cat and the children; and work on my thesis.

Colon

A *colon* marks a pause for explanation, expansion, enumeration or elaboration. A colon should be used to introduce the following: a list; a block quotation (and in some cases a short quotation within a sentence); or a second clause that explains, elaborates on, or expands the first clause.

Apostrophe

An apostrophe is used to indicate contraction (where the apostrophe stands for omitted letters) or possession. An apostrophe is not used with the plural form.

isn't/hadn't/it's/can't/you've/shouldn't/what's/who's/they're [contraction] Margaret's book/The dog's bone/The nation's psyche/The children's pet [possession]

I ate the avocados /She went on holidays/The 1920s... [plural forms, so no apostrophe]

A common mistake involving apostrophes is to use 'it's' instead of 'its' and vice versa. The simple rule is that the pronoun 'its' (as with the pronouns 'his', 'hers', 'theirs', etc.) does not take an apostrophe to indicate possession. For example:

The car lost its wheel/Its rear wheel needed replacing/Every dog has its day [pronouns]

If, on the other hand, your 'its' is a contraction (of 'it has', 'it is', etc.) an apostrophe is required. For example:

It's been a really dry summer/I don't think it's up to her to decide [contractions]

Hyphens and dashes

Hyphens and dashes are not the same and are not used for the same things.

- A hyphen (-) separates the two parts of a compound word. Note that compound words can become single words over time (e.g., multi-disciplinary to multidisciplinary) so check your recommended dictionary to establish the current and correct usage of compound words.
- An en dash/rule (–) is used to indicate a range of years or numbers (e.g., 1922–1925; pp. 7–10). An en-dash is also used to join compound adjectival phrases (e.g., post–Civil War).
- An em dash/rule (—) is used to indicate a break in a sentence, often with more emphasis intended than would be suggested by a comma. Em dashes can be closed (no space on either side) or open (space on either side) depending on the style followed.
- A 3-em dash/rule (———) is often used in bibliographies and indexes to stand for repeated successive entries of the same surname or item.

En and em dashes can be inserted as special characters in word processing program.

Comma

A comma is used to separate the following elements within a sentence:

- Independent clauses joined by conjunctions (e.g., and, but, for, or, nor, yet, so, whereas). If the clauses are short, the comma can be omitted.

She was anxious to submit her thesis by the end of May, but her supervisor felt it needed intensive revision and restructuring.

Her dog was sick but she didn't care. [short independent clauses]
- Items in a list or series of three or more items. If there is a conjunction joining the last two items in a series or list and there is likely to be ambiguity (as in the second example below), a 'serial' comma is used.

She bought butter, milk, jam, oranges, apples and bananas.

His interests included volleyball, astronomy, cooking fresh produce, and cats.
- Introductory phrases

During the June semester break, Jennifer travelled to Sydney to attend a conference.
- Contrasting phrases

The research was difficult, not easy.
- Conjunctive adverbs (e.g., namely, however, consequently, therefore, hence). Note that if the conjunctive adverb comes between two independent clauses (as in the second example below), it should be preceded by a semi-colon

It was, however, the last time that such a meeting would take place.

He had spent the entire weekend working; however, his thesis was still behind schedule.
- Forms of address

'What are you doing, Bill?' 'I'm eating, Jack.'

Ethics

For all research projects, refer to the [The National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research \(2023\)](#) for guidance. Research projects and parts of research projects that involve gathering information from

or about humans, animals and/or organisations are likely to require ethics approval if the proposal involves any or all of (but not limited to) the following: *interviews; surveys and questionnaires; audio or video recording; using archived data in which individuals are identifiable; photography of people; performances involving others; study or research on illegal activities; access to an individual's personal documents or information; or if you wish to publish your research findings in a peer-reviewed Journal or peer reviewed Conference Proceedings.*

Ethics application [forms and information can be found here](#). If in doubt whether or not you require ethics clearance, then please consult the Ethics Officer on 03 5327 6094 or email research.ethics@federation.edu.au.

As specified in The Code, the University has in place a framework for dealing with complaints and allegations regarding research breaches and research misconduct. Failure to follow ethical guidelines or the collection of data with approval may lead to disciplinary action or even a show cause and termination of enrollment. Any ethics approval must be noted in your thesis.

Submitting the Thesis

Candidates must complete and submit the Intention to Submit form ([available on this page](#)) at least four weeks prior to their intended submission date. The candidate submits thesis / exegesis to Graduate Research School via email (research.degrees@federation.edu.au) using the required form. All theses submitted for examination must be accompanied by a completed Release of Thesis form ([available on this page](#)), and include a statement of originality incorporating an acknowledgement of others' contributions, editorial assistance, copyright provisions, required summaries and other relevant approvals. A thesis will not be released for examination without these materials in place. For further guidance, candidates are directed to the appropriate [HDR Guideline and Procedure](#)

Electronic copies of most [successful Federation Theses can be located by searching here](#).

Examples

Example of a Title Page

<p>Anxiety Ailments Experienced by Students at Federation University Australia and Other Universities</p> <p>Polyanna Hocking BA(Hons)</p> <p>Submitted in total fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy</p> <p>Federation University Australia December 2015</p> <p>School, Institute or Research Centre XXX (Optional)</p> <p>PO Box 663 University Drive, Mount Helen Ballarat Victoria 3353 Australia</p>

Example of a Table of Contents Page

Table of Contents

Table of contents	ii
Summary	iii
Statement of authorship	v
Ethics approvals	vi
Acknowledgements	iv
Professional editorial assistance	vi
Peer-reviewed publications and conference presentations	vii
Chapter contents	x
List of tables	xiv
List of figures	xix
List of appendices	xx
Abbreviations and acronyms	xxi
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
Chapter 2 Literature review.....	25
Chapter 3 Methodology.....	77
Chapter 4 Results	115
Chapter 5 Discussion and conclusions	175
References	221
Appendices.....	247

Example of a List of Appendices Page

List of Appendices		
Appendix A	Extended footnotes from Chapter 1	247
Appendix B	Public perception of universities	251
Appendix C	Initial categorisations of emotion	253
Appendix D	Final categorisations of emotion	263
Appendix E	Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) approval letter.....	277
Appendix F	Participant information statement: Questionnaire	279
Appendix G	Copy of the questionnaire	281
Appendix H	Participant information statement: Interviews	283
Appendix I	Copy of the interview questions	289
Appendix J	Copy of the consent form for the interviews	291
xx		