

1. Introduction

The purpose of writing a thesis is to fulfill your degree requirements but also to make your research accessible to others. It is important, then, to ensure that the thesis submitted for examination reflects well on the quality of your work and on the University.

This guide is in addition to information in the School of Graduate Studies Calendar and offers guidance on relevant procedures and policies as you write your thesis and move through submission and examination. It is the responsibility of both you and your supervisor(s) to be familiar with all relevant Calendar regulations of the School of Graduate Studies plus all the degree regulations/requirements specific to your own academic unit.

All PhD students are required to submit a thesis that describes their **original** research. The PhD thesis must not only be original scholarship, but it must also make a significant contribution to knowledge in your field(s) of study.

A Masters thesis must demonstrate the ability to carry out research and to organize and analyze results. **Masters degrees requiring the submission of a project report, paper folio, practicum, or internship report that are examined through the School of Graduate Studies are subject to the same regulations as theses.**

The following fundamental points apply to all PhD and thesis-based Masters programs:

- The thesis topic should be decided as early as possible
- The structure and format of the thesis is of utmost importance (see Section 2 of this guide)
- A high degree of literacy is expected
- The thesis should demonstrate full understanding of relevant literature in your subject area(s).
- Thesis material must conform to Memorial University's Intellectual Property Guidelines.
- Thesis research funded by CIHR, NSERC, and/or SSHRC must conform to the ethical guidelines of the Tri-Council Ethics Policy.

Quality of Writing

- Strive to be as clear, concise, and informative as possible
- Elegance and clarity are always desirable
- Grammar and spelling errors, as well as typos, are not acceptable
- Excessive use of jargon should be avoided

On using editorial and proofreading services: there are number of valuable options for writing assistance. Memorial University's Writing Centre should be your first choice if you're looking for writing help. Some software and computer apps are better than others for assistance and you must only use these with the knowledge and approval of your supervisor. If you wish to hire an editor/proofreader, the School of Graduate Studies strongly advises that you only hire a professional who will provide you a contract outlining services; further, you must have your supervisor(s) approval to work with a professional editor to ensure that the submitted thesis can be deemed your work.

2. Thesis Structure and Presentation

Traditional Style
Manuscript Style
Portfolio Style
FAQs

Early in your thesis research, you should discuss and decide with your supervisor(s) if your thesis will take the traditional, the manuscript, or the portfolio style of presentation. The key word here is STYLE. What follows are general guidelines and best practices but many of your questions will be specific to your research area/discipline and need to be worked out with your supervisor(s) and in accordance with all departmental or academic unit guidelines.

No matter which style you decide to use, you should make it clear in your Introduction what your style is so that your examiners know what type of document they are about to examine. This same information should be conveyed to potential examiners by the Head of your academic unit when they are in the process of recommending examiners.

No matter the thesis style you use, your thesis must meet the requirements of your degree as prescribed by the appropriate calendar regulations and policies.

While you can change your mind about the style while in the writing process, a clear understanding of which style you want to use will save time later.

Traditional Style

This style of thesis presentation is sometimes called a “proto-book” and that’s the best way to think of the traditional thesis: it is written as a single, unified document that could be revised into a book length publication. The Traditional Style thesis must have an Introduction, a series of linked and integrated chapters that address a central thesis statement and/or research question, and a Conclusion.

Manuscript Style

This style of thesis includes a series of “chapters” that have appeared in, are under review with, or will be submitted to peer-reviewed publications. The Manuscript Style thesis must use a consistent citation style throughout no matter what the published version of some chapters might have used. The Manuscript Style also requires an Introduction or Overview section that provides all of the following information:

- a comprehensive review of relevant literature
- how your research fits into the larger context of your field(s) or discipline(s)
- the objectives of your thesis research
- a statement that makes clear the coherence of the chapters to follow

The chapters of a Manuscript Style thesis are “stand-alone” in the sense that they have been prepared for separate publication to one or more peer-reviewed outlets. However, each chapter still requires the following:

- an introduction
- a methodology section (if applicable)
- a discussion section
- a concluding section

It is expected that you will be the principal/primary author for every chapter. Because each chapter is stand alone, you should have a co-authorship statement for every chapter (if needed). Please see section 5 of this guide for more details.

At the end of the Manuscript Style thesis, you must also include a Summary or Discussion/Conclusion that unites all the material presented in the chapters in a cohesive way.

Portfolio Style

The Portfolio Style allows you to engage in different or new ways of engaging diverse audiences for your work. Crucial to the Portfolio Style, because it is comparatively new, is an early agreement with your supervisor(s) and committee members and the Head of your academic unit on the presentation, formatting, and general outline for your Portfolio thesis.

You need to be prepared that a Portfolio Style thesis will require, perhaps, an awareness of potentially unexpected challenges in compilation. The Portfolio Style requires an Introduction or Overview section that provides: a) a comprehensive review of relevant literature; b) a discussion of how your work fits into the larger context of your field(s) or discipline(s); c) the objectives of your thesis work; and d) a statement that makes clear the coherence of chapter or sections to follow. At the end of your thesis you must also include a Summary or Discussion/Conclusion section that unites all the material presented in a cohesive way.

A Portfolio style thesis can present a variety of research efforts, including (but not limited to): applied work(s), creative work(s), digital work(s), experiential work(s), entrepreneurial work(s), or any combination thereof.

Some examples of content (but these are not the only ones) include:

- Policy reports and/or papers
- Knowledge mobilization to the media, communities, or other groups standing to benefit from the research
- Publicly available resources (e.g., novels, comics, web tools, apps, music, art, documentaries)
- Inventions, prototypes, or business plans
- Patents or other technology licenses
- Educational programs, course materials, or assessment measures
- Translations
- Oral histories
- Cultural creations
- Creative work from festivals or exhibitions
- Digital artifacts (e.g. animations, webpages, interactive portals, software)
- Special issues that result from curating/managerial editing practice (e.g. oral history archives, literary magazines)
- Special issues resulting from original production of objects or events (e.g. performing arts, galleries, museums, archives)
- Traditional academic publications or works in progress toward publication
- Traditional style thesis chapters

FAQs

1) **How many chapters should my thesis have?**

The minimum is 3 chapters: introduction, body, discussion/conclusion.

2) **How many pages should my thesis be?**

As with the number of chapters, the length of your thesis is a question for your supervisor according to your discipline's expectations.

3) **What if part my thesis has been published in an altered version?**

Note this in the acknowledgements, in the introduction, and as a footnote in the chapter that has published content. Depending on publishing agreements, you may need to get copyright permission from the publisher.

4) **What if I've co-authored part(s) of my thesis?**

Note this in the acknowledgements, in the Introduction, and as a footnote in the chapter that has published content.

5) **Can the chapters be in different stages of publication?**

Yes, but you want to alert your examiners to these stages (in your acknowledgements and introduction and as a footnote to the relevant chapters).

6) **What if my methodology is the same for more than one chapter?**

You should note this in your introduction so examiners are aware of the fact and you should also attempt to vary your language so as to tailor the information to the specific content of each chapter.

7) **What if my publication status changes during the examination process?**

Not a problem. You will make changes to the thesis before final submission and after the examination process and that is the time to update any publication status.

8) **Can I include peer-reviewed conference papers as a chapter?**

Not as presented at the conference; rather, material that has been presented as a conference paper can be noted as such but the text of your thesis must conform to the expectations of academic writing for your discipline.

9) **What if an examiner asks for revisions to something I've already published?**

You should always consider examiners' requests for changes with your supervisor and make all revisions that are relevant and helpful in improving your thesis.

3. Formatting for all Thesis Styles

Font and Spacing:

- General text is double-spaced in portrait format
- Single spacing used for footnotes or lengthy quotations
- Triple or larger spacing may be used where necessary to set off headings, sub headings, or illustrations
- Font, font size, style of footnotes and references must be consistent
- Times New Roman 12pt is recommended
- Smaller fonts may be used for footnotes, graphs, etc. but must be sufficiently clear

Margins:

- If you want to have your thesis bound, use these margins:
Left: 3.8 cm (1.5 inches); Right: 2.5 cm (1.0 inch)
Top and Bottom: 3.0 cm (1.25 inches)
- If you have no intention of binding your thesis, all margins should be 2.5 cm (1.0 inch).

Pagination:

- All pages must have a number
- All page numbers are centered at bottom of page
- Acknowledgements, Abstract, Summary, and Table of Contents use lower case Roman numerals (i, ii, iii)
- Title page is (i) but suppress the number (not indicated)
- Body of thesis text uses Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3)
- Figures, Tables, Plates, Appendixes are numbered consecutively with Arabic numerals to the end of the Bibliography/References

Illustrations:

- Tables, figures, photographs, scanned images and other non-text material whether in black/white or colour should be legible, arranged neatly and effectively, and must always be referred to in the text.
- Title of a table should be placed above the table, and the title of a figure or plate should be positioned below the figure.
- Oversize maps, charts or diagrams must be folded so that they can be bound with the pages or, as is most common, inserted in a pocket fastened to the inside of the back cover when the thesis is bound.
- If possible, media containing additional print or non-print material should be included in a pocket fastened to the inside of the back cover when the thesis is bound.
- Prints, photo-offsets or scanned images should be provided in all required copies of the thesis.
- Where not forming a complete page, non-text material should be properly mounted on a page.

Language:

With the exception of the theses submitted from the Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures Department, all theses are written in English, except with the express permission of the Dean of Graduate Studies.

4. Order of Thesis Content

All theses, no matter which structure/format you choose, have the following components and in the following order:

- Title Page
- Abstract
- General Summary
- Acknowledgements
- Lists* (includes Tables, Figures, PLates, Abbreviations and symbols, Appendices)
- Thesis Text
- Bibliography and References
- Appendices*
- Supplementary Files*

*Note: Lists, Appendices, and Supplementary Files are not required for all theses but are commonly included.

Detail on each component

Title Page

– contains the copyright notice and information used to identify the thesis in library databases. The date should indicate the month and year of your anticipated graduation. In choosing your title, keep in mind that a title is a valuable scholarly reference and will often be the only information a prospective reader will have available. Ensure your title describes the content of your thesis and contains searchable keywords. An example can be found in Resources and Tools.

Abstract

– should be no more than 200 words for a Masters and 350 words for a PhD thesis. The abstract is written for a reader familiar with your area(s) of research and must offer readers sufficient information for them to decide if your work is relevant to them. Ensure that you use searchable keywords.

General Summary

– has the same content as the Abstract but is written for a general audience and should be no more than 150 words for a Masters and 350 words for a PhD thesis. Provide a summary of your research written in clear, plain language. It should be written in non-technical terms that can be clearly understood by readers outside of academia. The General Summary must not be identical to the Abstract.

Acknowledgements

– please consult Section 5 of this Guide for details

Table of Contents

– a decimal system as shown in Resources and Tools should be used. Each heading and subheading in the Table of Contents must appear and match the text of your thesis.

Lists of Tables, Figures, Plates, Abbreviations and Symbols, and Appendices

– if any or all of these lists are in your thesis, then the Lists must come after the Table of Contents. Each List must start on a new page and use the decimal system of the Table of Contents. Examples can be found in Resources and Tools.

Thesis Text

– the body of the Thesis Text must follow one of the three structures outlined in Section 2 (Thesis Structure and Presentation). Your thesis describes your research as a whole and should be presented in a scholarly manner consistent with the accepted conventions of your discipline.

Bibliography and References

– all theses require a collected, unified Bibliography or list of References (sometimes referred to as a Works Cited) at the end of the main text (before Appendices). Bibliographic data must be complete, clear, and exact. Format for the bibliography should be in a style appropriate for your discipline. Section 6 (Resources and Tools) has links to Memorial Library online citation guides. If a DOI is available, you should include that information.

Appendices

– all thesis research that requires ethics approval must include the most recent ethics approval documentation as an Appendix. Additional appendices normally provide information that is relevant for completeness but detracts from the readability of the main text or presents data used in the thesis but not directly obtained by the author. For example, lengthy tables, tabulated and reference data, detailed explanations of laboratory procedures, and computer programs are typical appendix information. Important note: for privacy reasons, no signed documents may be included in your thesis.

Supplementary Files

– Supplementary files may be included with your thesis and in any file format. Please consider the audience when selecting file format, as some may require specific software to use. Possible ways you could present digital files are: a flash drive and provide instructions on how to access the files; or, a direct link to where the content can be found online. You should include a description of the digital files and the relevance to your thesis work. Keep your original files in an external repository. If required, the Request to Include Copyright Material form should be included as a supplementary file. A recommended depository for the permanent storage of data associated with the thesis is [Memorial University's Research Repository](#).

5. Authorship and Acknowledgements

- Acknowledgements
- Co-Authorship Statements
- Intellectual Property and Copyright
- Thesis Release
- Thesis Canada Participation

Acknowledgements

Intellectual and practical assistance, advice, encouragement and sources of financial support should be acknowledged.

You must acknowledge any prior publication of any material included in the thesis both in this section and in your Introductory chapter. If material in your thesis has been published, then you must secure copyright from the publisher(s) and any co-authors. Securing these permissions might take time and you need to secure the publisher permission as early as possible.

It is always possible that a section or chapter of your thesis will be altered from a published format. Always note at the beginning of these sections the extent of the changes from the published version.

Include these copyright permissions in your thesis; ideally, this should be included in the text you submit to examiners but it must be included in the version that is deposited in the library after examination process is complete.

If you wish to include a land acknowledgement, be sure to consult Memorial University's official land acknowledgement for appropriate wording.

Co-Authorship Statements

Research is often collaborative and frequently involves the contributions of several people. You are expected to make a major intellectual and practical contribution to all the work that is reported in your thesis. To that end, a co-authorship statement must be included in your thesis, usually following the Abstract and General Summary.

Further, the School of Graduate Studies strongly suggests that each section of your thesis that is a result of collaborative efforts have its own co-authorship statement. While this might seem repetitive, your thesis examiners will appreciate knowing this information for every part of your thesis.

Normally, papers with multiple authors can only be used in one thesis (that is, if another student has worked on a paper with you and contributed equally, you both should write traditional theses and identify your own contributions).

If you are the sole author of all or parts of your thesis, state this clearly and briefly.

You must make a clear statement for each section of your thesis that is co-authored. In these statements, you must describe your unique contribution and address contributions made in a) design and identification of the research topic, b) practical aspects of the research, c) data analysis, and d) manuscript preparation.

Intellectual Property and Copyright

Canada's Copyright Act permits "fair dealing" of someone else's work. There is reasonable flexibility in the interpretation of what constitutes "fair dealing" and you are allowed to quote a reasonable extract provided it is properly cited.

Extensive quotation requires written permission of the copyright holder (usually the publisher) which must be noted in the thesis.

Students opting to submit a thesis in manuscript format should note that incorporation of published material will require written permission from the copyright holder.

Copies of the Canadian Copyright Act can be consulted in the Reserve Section of the Queen Elizabeth II Library and the Health Sciences Library.

A useful statement of the Canadian Copyright Act relevant to Educational Institutions in Newfoundland can be found at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20111205195654/http://www.cmec.ca/Programs/Copyright/Pages/Default.aspx>

At the time of submission of a thesis, students are requested to complete and sign a "Request to Include Copyright Material" form (Appendix 4). Students should also be fully aware of [Memorial's Intellectual Property Policy](#).

Thesis Release

At the time of submission of a thesis, students must agree to authorize the deposit of the thesis in the University Library.

Theses Canada Participation

A digital copy of the thesis is sent to the [Theses Canada Program](#) where it will be catalogued, preserved, and accessible in the Theses Canada Portal.

In addition, theses submitted in manuscript format must include a written waiver of all rights required to permit publication of the thesis as described above.

Written permission must be obtained from any co-author who retains copyright or the person to whom the co-author has assigned copyright (Appendix 4).

The thesis should indicate that the article has been reproduced "with permission" or "under license."

Copies of letters for permission or licenses must be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies at the time the thesis is submitted for examination.