Presenting Your Thesis: Notes on the arrangement of theses and their preparation for binding and deposit

1.0 Introduction
This is a guide to the presentation of a thesis required for the award of a research degree.

Academic Services in conjunction with Library Services has drawn up this guide as the standard for all theses presented for research degrees in the University of Birmingham. This guide deals with the practicalities of producing your thesis in a format that is acceptable for examination and for deposit in the Library. However, this guide does not deal with the content and academic standard required of a thesis. On these matters you must always consult your supervisor and the guidance issued by your School.

All candidates are required to submit their thesis in English unless formal permission to use another language was granted at the point of admission to the research degree. If material submitted is the result of collaborative research, the submission must clearly identify your contribution.

The first section of this guide draws to your attention practical issues about which you should be aware before you embark on the final assembly of your thesis. Many practical decisions (such as the paper to be used, how to cope with illustrative matter, binding specifications and procedures etc.) need to be thought out before you put together your completed thesis with all of its constituent elements. Unless you are aware of these practical issues, you may find that it is impossible to have this done in the fashion you anticipated, or that the costs incurred will be greater than they need have been. Some mistakes are impossible to correct when the time comes for binding. The thesis must be produced to a standard acceptable for long-term storage, and bound in accordance with University requirements before the degree may be awarded.

Normally two copies must be presented for examination. In some instances, three copies will be required (i.e. for some members of staff, for PhD by Published Work, and for higher doctorates).

A final printed copy of the thesis must be deposited in the Library, and you must also deposit an electronic copy of your work in the University's eTheses Repository(1). Your Supervisor or Department may request a copy of your finished thesis.

The second section of the guide is intended to give you guidance on general aspects concerning the layout of the thesis itself.

2.0 General Considerations
Before embarking on your thesis, give careful consideration to how you are going to manage your work over the period of your research. For example: if you do not have your own computer, is the wordprocessing package that you intend to use freely available on the computer clusters in the University? Are there any special requirements (e.g. graphing, presentation of statistical data, etc.) which might affect the choice of software?

How are you going to manage your references? If you are using reference management software, does the package allow you to format and print out references in a style suitable for the presentation of your thesis?

During the process of writing there are a number of practical and technical points to observe, and you should review these well in advance of final writing.

If your thesis includes confidential or sensitive material, does this need to be presented in a separate volume or appendix that would enable the Library to withhold that section from public access? If your thesis includes any third-party material, have you sought appropriate permission to incorporate and disseminate it? Further guidance on this is
You should allow adequate time for preparation, word processing, checking and corrections. If someone else is typing your thesis you should check the work frequently in the early stages so that any problems or difficulties can be detected early.

2.1 Paper
You should use A4 paper. See Section 2.10 for information on dealing with oversize matter. Where computer data is to be presented, A4 is normally the best size. Buy a sufficient quantity of paper for the whole job at the outset. If you find that the paper you have varies in size, or that insertions (e.g. photographs, plates, maps etc.) are slightly different, consult staff in the University Bindery before proceeding and certainly before you assemble the thesis. It may not be possible to trim to a uniform format after assembly.

The paper itself should be good quality bond paper. For single-sided printing, the weight must be at least 70 grammes per square metre (gsm). If you print on both sides of the paper, it should be at least 80 gsm, preferably 100 gsm, and sufficiently opaque for the text to be clearly legible on both sides.

2.2 Typing and Wordprocessing
You must make your own arrangements for the typing of your thesis. Use double line-spacing throughout the body of the text.

Single-spacing is acceptable for quotations, footnotes, captions, etc and within items in the bibliography. Layout should be reasonably uniform in length of line and the number of lines per page.

The final script should be printed using a good quality printer. If double-sided printing is used, there must be no show through of ink from one side of the paper to the other, nor transfer of ink to facing pages.

Training is available on using advanced functions in Word to produce research documents, see http://www.skills.bham.ac.uk/courses/.

2.3 Typeface and Point Size
It is extremely important that the thesis is clearly set out and is easy to read. A clear, standard typeface should be used. Recommended typefaces include Times Roman, Arial and Courier; a number of other standard faces are equally acceptable but consult your supervisor if in doubt.

To help ensure clarity it is important that the point size is not too small. Your thesis may be photocopied or reduced at a later stage, so a 12 point typeface is the recommended standard for general use. If there is felt to be a strong reason for using another point size you should consult your supervisor before proceeding.

2.4 Margins and Pagination
The margin on the binding edge must be at least 3 cm. When photographs are mounted the binding margin must be increased to 4 cm (see section 2.7 below).

It is desirable to leave 3 cm at the top and bottom of the page and about 2 cm at the outer edge.

Preliminary pages (see section 3.2) are unnumbered, pagination beginning with the first page of the text proper. Page numbers may either be placed at top-centre, 1 cm below the edge or at the foot of the page, 2 cm above the edge. Be consistent in whichever style you choose.

2.5 Chapter Headings and Sub-Headings
New chapters should always commence on a fresh page. Titles should be in capitals and centered. Sub-headings within chapters should be left-justified.

2.6 Photocopies or Copied Material
If photocopies are to be included, ensure that all copies are clear and of high quality, especially when plates are being reproduced. It is important that the printed matter is square-set on each page with approximately equal margins all round. If this is not done it may be impossible to trim the pages properly; even if it is possible, costs will be increased. It is also important to ensure that you are not infringing someone else’s copyright in the material.
2.7 Photographs

Colour photocopies or scanning and printing onto photographic quality A4 paper can provide good quality reproduction of photographs. If this produces a satisfactory result, the binding process is made easier.

Where original photographs are used either a matt or gloss finish is acceptable but you should seek the advice of your supervisor on the most effective one for the purpose in hand. Full-page photographs are best mounted on single weight printing paper, preferably not glazed. Double weight paper is difficult to oversew, and might have to be hinged which will increase the cost of binding. Copy paper is not heavy enough for satisfactory mounting. For photographs larger than the page size, refer to section 2.10.

Photographs can be mounted by a variety of methods, but whichever method you choose must be permanent. The use of ‘photographic stamps’ is a good method but not always readily available. Photographs can also be mounted with PVA (polyvinyl acetate) based glue which is available from good stationers and photographic shops. Photos should be ‘spot mounted’ at the corners and middle, and not glued all over. This helps to avoid warping of the mounting paper. Use the adhesive sparingly to avoid transfer to adjacent pages. Photographs attached with paste based adhesives (‘Pritt sticks’) tend to dry out and become detached after a while. If in doubt, consult the University’s Bindery for advice.

2.8 Plates

Plates require careful thought if good appearance is to be achieved. Plates can be mounted upright or sideways. The general rule in either case is: caption below plate, and plate number immediately above the plate. If the plate is to be mounted sideways then its head should be towards the binding edge. It is of vital importance that a binding margin of 4cm is available on the correct side of the page.

2.9 Graphs and Diagrams

Page-size graphs should be treated in the same way as plates (see section 2.8) with regard to numbering, captions and margins.

2.10 Oversize Photographs, Plates, Graphs and Diagrams (anything which will not fit within an A4 page)

This requires great care. Staff in the Bindery are skilled in handling these materials to produce a professional finish.

Joining of charts, graphs and diagrams: It is not recommended that charts etc. be joined unless absolutely necessary. They can be printed on A3 paper and folded in at the front edge of the thesis. If this is not possible, they should be overlapped slightly and joined with a suitable PVA based adhesive. This type of adhesive is available from all good stationery shops.

Folding: We recommend that you do not attempt to fold oversized material yourself, as a page wrongly folded may have to be refolded and its appearance will then be spoiled. Allow generous margins when printing these pages, particularly on the binding edge (at least 3cm). Graph, diagram and map numbers are best positioned in the bottom right-hand corner.

When folded, the pages will need to be smaller than A4 in both the width and length to avoid the folds being cut off when the book is trimmed. If these dimensions cannot be achieved, eg for very large maps and diagrams, then a separate portfolio or a pocket at the end of the thesis may be required.

The Bindery will be happy to fold items and make customized pockets or portfolios to suit your needs. These pages should still be included in the pagination.

Disks, cassettes and music manuscript: Theses often need to contain supplementary media. Disks can usually be built into a pocket at the back of the volume, whilst audio- and video cassettes need to be boxed as a separate item. The Bindery staff will be able to advise.

2.11 Binding Procedures

Three months before submitting your thesis, you must complete a Notice of Intention to Submit a Thesis Form and return it to the Research Team in Academic & Student Administration. This form is available from: http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/study/support/admin/pgr/thesis.shtml. Receipt of this form by the Research Team will start the process for the nomination of examiners.
Temporary Bindings
It is normal practice for the copies of your thesis submitted for examination to be bound in a glued soft binding for examination purposes. This is an inexpensive binding that allows any corrections to be made before a relatively expensive hard copy is made. The Bindery operates a 30 minute service any weekday 9:00-12:30 and 13:30-4:00 p.m. After examination these copies can be unbound (by the Bindery) and the pages re-used for the final hard copy.

Important Note:
The Library deposit copy needs to include a Declaration Form (see 3.1 below) at the temporary binding stage. Please bring a signed copy with you. We may not be able to proceed with your binding without it.

Final Hard Copies
It is a requirement of the University that you have a copy of your thesis hard bound for permanent deposit in the Library. Your Supervisor or School may also request a copy (check with your own School if you are unsure, before you bring in your final copies for binding). You must also submit an electronic copy to the eTheses Repository (see http://etheses.bham.ac.uk/information.html).

The Library deposit copy must be bound in the University’s Bindery, hard bound in University Blue, with gold lettering on the spine giving your name, the degree for which it is presented, and the year in which the degree is conferred. If your thesis comprises more than one volume, the volume numbers must also be lettered on the spine.

The normal service time is five working days. Express services are available on request.

In addition to the official copy, the Bindery will be happy to undertake the binding of any personal copies you require to your own specification.

Printing and photocopying Service
A quick, competitive printing and photocopying service is available. Prices and advice are available on request from Central Print (tel. 0121 414 6685).

2.12 Charges and Payment
Details of the Bindery’s current charges for thesis binding are available at http://www.bindery.bham.ac.uk. Consult the Bindery (tel. 0121 414 5797 or call in at the Central Printing reception point on the main campus – yellow zone Y4 at the Terraced Huts) to discuss your personal requirements. All work is to be paid for either in advance or on completion. If you cannot bring or collect your work you must deposit the full basic charge for each copy with the Bindery. If the cost exceeds the basic charge, you will be required to pay the excess. This point is of particular relevance to candidates for higher degrees (eg D.Sc, D.Eng, D.Litt) where extra labour is often involved.

Theses may be sent by post to the Bindery. They should be accompanied by the correct fee together with explicit instructions on the distribution of the bound copies. A postage and registration fee will be charged on each volume which is to be sent to an address outside the University. This amount should be added to the binding charge, again, consult the Bindery for details. Credit card payments are accepted, or cheques should be made payable to the University of Birmingham. No thesis will be allowed to leave the Bindery until payment for the work has been received in full.

3.0 Elements of the Thesis or Dissertation
A thesis must be an original work which makes a significant contribution to knowledge in or understanding of a particular field of study. It must contain material worthy of publication. It also demonstrates its relationship to the general corpus of knowledge in the field. In short it is the presentation of the results of original research in a critical and scholarly fashion. For these reasons it is essential that an appropriate presentation is adopted.

A thesis normally consists of the following elements:

- Author’s Declaration Form (deposit copy only)
- Preliminaries
  - title page
  - abstract
  - dedication
  - acknowledgements
  - contents listings
All the forms referred to in this guide are available at: http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/study/support/admin/pgr/thesis.shtml or from the Research Team in Academic & Student Administration.

3.1 Author’s Declaration Form
You must complete the Author’s Declaration Form and have it bound into the deposit copy of the thesis. Your thesis will be made available for consultation in the University Library, or in another UK library, via the Inter-Library Loans system, unless there are grounds for keeping the content of the thesis confidential. It will also be made available via the eTheses Repository(1) and EThOS(3), unless you have requested that it should not appear on the web.

When you submit your thesis, you will also need to supply an Abstract and Access Form with it, but this is not bound inside the thesis.

3.2 Preliminaries

3.2.1 Title Page
The title of the thesis should be given between 5 and 7 cm from the top of the page, followed by the name of the author and, after about a 5 cm space, a statement of the degree for which the thesis is submitted:

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE EFFECTS OF SELECTION WITHIN AN INBREEDING PROGRAMME IN SUNFLOWER

by

MARTIN TREVOR SMITH

A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

The bottom right-hand corner should state department and/or school, university and year of submission, with each element being given on a separate line:

Institute of Local Government Studies
School of Government and Society
College of Social Sciences
University of Birmingham
October 2010

Give your full name on the title page, as it will appear on the degree congregation list. This also facilitates tracing the thesis if someone wishes to consult it at a later date.

3.2.2 Abstract
An abstract – a succinct summary of the thesis containing all of the important concepts and conclusions of the work – should immediately follow the title page. It should be no more than 200 words in length. Do not number this page nor record it in the table of contents. This abstract will be used when the thesis is indexed in the Index to Theses(2), EThOS(3) and elsewhere.

3.2.3 Dedication
A dedication is optional. If one is made, the dedication page should follow the abstract. It should be unnumbered and not recorded in the table of contents.

3.2.4 Acknowledgements
You may wish to acknowledge any substantial academic, financial or other assistance that you may have received in the course of your research. Inclusion of acknowledgements – to whom, and the precise wording – is a matter for your own discretion, but they should follow the abstract and dedication on a separate unnumbered page which is not listed in the table of contents.

3.2.5 Contents Listings

3.2.5.1 Table of Contents
A table of contents, and if needed a list of illustrations and a list of tables, should always be included and should follow the acknowledgements. Contents listings are extremely important as a thesis has no index. Therefore, the contents listings must be accurate and informative – an examiner or reader may use them to find his or her way.
round the work. A good contents listing will also display the pattern of ideas through which the reader will be taken. The table of contents should show chapter and section titles (if any), demonstrating the relationship of the parts to each other by (if appropriate) indentation and numbering. Chapters and sections should be referenced to their page numbers.

3.2.5.2 List of Illustrations
A list of illustrations should follow the table of contents on a separate unnumbered page. If different types of illustrations are included this list can be subdivided into headed sections (e.g. Figures, Plates, Maps, Charts etc.). A page number should follow the title of the illustration. If illustrations have been inserted without page numbers then the terms “Facing page” or “Following page” should precede the appropriate page number. “Facing page” is used when one illustration is used; “Following page” is used when a whole series of illustrations has been inserted in the text.

3.2.5.3 List of Tables
If appropriate a list of tables should follow the list of illustrations on a separate unnumbered page.

3.2.5.4. Other Preliminary Listings
It may be advisable to include other listings at this point. For example, if the work extensively employs certain abbreviations, or includes new definitions or symbols, these may be placed most appropriately at this point. By placing them at the front, readers are alerted to their existence and can return to them when they need to be reminded of their meaning. However, lengthy lists of abbreviations (i.e. more than a page) may be better located after the main body of the work. Whatever you decide, you must always explain fully any abbreviation, symbol or new term when you first use it in the text.

3.3 The Text
The main body of the text follows the preliminaries. As has been indicated in the Introduction, this guide is not concerned with the academic content and standard required of a thesis. Within the text, however, it may be necessary to indicate additional information or acknowledge other sources.

Throughout a substantial body of text it is certain that you will need to use references to acknowledge sources that you have consulted and, possibly, footnotes to illuminate some points or issues which are raised. It is important that you have a clear understanding of how and why references and footnotes are employed in a scholarly work.

3.3.1 References and Referencing Systems
Referencing is an essential part of academic scholarship. Intellectual honesty demands that authors identify their sources. Referencing has three main functions:

a) to acknowledge an intellectual debt to another author where you have drawn heavily from his or her published work or ideas, either explicitly or implicitly;
b) to support specific facts or claims which you make in your text;
c) to enable the reader to find sources to which you have referred easily and quickly.

Failure to identify sources upon which you draw is plagiarism, the most serious of academic offences and a possible breach of copyright law. A thesis which embodies deliberate plagiarism will almost certainly be rejected. If you are in doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, or how to avoid it, you should consult your supervisor, and read the University’s Guidelines on Plagiarism which are normally issued annually by Academic Services.

Referencing systems are normally based on the author-date system, eg Harvard, or a numerical system such as the Vancouver System. For full details on how to construct references for different types of sources, and on referencing systems generally, please refer to the I-CITE(4) guide.

3.3.2 Footnotes
Footnotes are much less common in a scholarly work than they once were. Footnotes are notes relating to the text placed at the foot of a page. Sometimes they are collected together at the end of a chapter, or at the end of the whole work: in these cases they are then often referred to as “Notes” or “Endnotes.” It is tempting to use these notes but, in fact, they should be used with great caution and considerable restraint. Frequent or over-indulgent use of footnotes is often an indication that the author has not thought out clearly what he or she wishes to say, or is incapable of
attaching a proper degree of importance to competing pieces of information or arguments which are being presented. Footnotes, but particularly endnotes, are also distracting to the reader, interrupting his or her concentration on following the line of argument. Footnotes should therefore be restricted as follows:

a) to develop an idea or expand a quotation where to do so in the text would really disturb the balance of the current argument;

b) to refer the reader to another part of the thesis;

c) to state a source;

d) to acknowledge a borrowing.

If none of the above criteria apply then an appendix or special note at the end of the thesis is probably more appropriate. There are some subjects where footnotes are particularly appropriate (e.g., law, where it is common to place references to cited cases at the foot of the page so that a reader can quickly identify the full details of a case). In most circumstances, however, they should be used with care and restraint.

3.3.2 Layout of Footnotes

Footnotes are generally indicated by small superscript numbers placed at the end of a sentence. Numbering begins afresh on each new page. In works where footnotes are used both as references and as footnotes proper, the numbering is often sequential. Notes or endnotes are numbered sequentially as they appear. If tables are used then footnotes to them should be placed at the bottom of the tables to which they refer, and not at the bottom of the page.

3.3.3 Length of the Thesis

The normal maximum length of the thesis or dissertation is stated in the Regulations for the particular degree for which you are registered. Your supervisor should guide you on the appropriate length for your work. The calculation of length excludes appendices, tables, diagrams, references, bibliography, footnotes and endnotes.

If your thesis is likely to exceed the maximum given in the Regulations you should, at an early stage, seek written permission of the University’s Research Progress & Awards Sub Panel. Where approval has not been obtained, theses exceeding the word limit will be returned to students. You are required to complete a Submission of Research Degree Theses: Declarations form confirming the word length of the thesis.

3.4 End Pages

The end pages include such sections as appendices, special notes, a list of references and a bibliography.

3.4.1 Appendices

Appendices and special notes may in effect be interchangeable. Appendices are often used for information which is supportive in nature and will not impede the progress of the reader in the main text. They are especially useful for readers who require greater clarification. Therefore, they can be used as follows:

a) for explanations and elaborations which are too long for footnotes, but are not essential parts of the text;

b) texts of documents, laws etc. which illustrate the text;

c) long charts or tables of test-data, specifications for equipment and materials used, etc.

Do not regard them as repositories for things which do not fit elsewhere in the text – ensure that you have a clear justification for including them. Appendices should be listed on the contents page. Where more than one appendix is included, assign each one a number and list them like chapters.

3.4.2 List of References/Bibliography

This is an important part of the thesis. It is important systematically to record the sources you have consulted and to manage your references in a way that facilitates their incorporation in your thesis.

The list of references must contain all of the sources which you have found significant enough to mention in the text. Its presentation will depend on whichever referencing system you have adopted. “List of References” is often the preferred heading for introducing such a list for a thesis in the Sciences; “Bibliography” is often the term preferred in the Humanities.

It should be noted, however, that “bibliography” is a term, which has a slightly more precise meaning. It is often used to include sources which have not been cited in the text itself, but which the author thinks that readers might wish to go on to consult. Such a bibliography, if
included, is often sub-divided into sections if this is likely to prove more helpful. Where your research has made extensive use of primary sources (unpublished materials) then these might best be listed separately from published material. Where the work is exclusively about one individual then it may be advisable to give separate lists of works by and about that individual. If these conditions do not apply then normally a consolidated alphabetical sequence is to be preferred.

4.0 Notes
(1) University of Birmingham eTheses Repository  http://etheses.bham.ac.uk/
(2) INDEX to theses http://www.theses.com/
(3) EThOS (Electronic Theses Online Service) http://www.ethos.ac.uk
(4) I-Cite: Guide to Citing References http://www.i-cite.bham.ac.uk/

5.0 Further Reading


University of Birmingham (No date) i-cite Guide to Citing References [online]. Available from http://www.i-cite.bham.ac.uk/ [Accessed October 2010]

SK05/JR October 2010