

THESIS GUIDELINES

Welcome to the Thesis Guidelines

This handbook serves as a comprehensive guide to assist you in the preparation, writing, and submission of your MBA thesis. It is designed to provide you with essential information, guidelines to help you navigate the thesis process successfully. Whether you are selecting a topic, conducting research, or formatting your final document, this handbook offers valuable insights and practical advice to ensure your thesis meets the highest academic standards.

We encourage you to read through this handbook thoroughly and refer to it often throughout your thesis journey. Should you have any questions or need further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact your academic advisor or the thesis coordinator.

All content should be in Times New Roman and 12 pt font, with the exception of the Copyright label itself being 11 pt font.

THESIS-MBA

A thesis is a long academic document that a master's candidate writes to obtain a relevant academic degree. Hence, writing a quality thesis is crucial for our students to successfully complete the course. A good thesis demonstrates a student's academic prowess in their field of study as well as helps hone their analytical and research skills. Managing all the elements associated with a thesis while ensuring that the quality is not compromised can be challenging.

The Constituents of the Thesis

- 1. Cover Page/Title Page**
- 2. Thesis Approval Page**
- 3. Abstract**
- 4. Dedication, Acknowledgements, and Preface (each optional)**
- 5. Table of Contents, with page numbers**
- 6. List of Tables, List of Figures, or List of Illustrations, with titles and page numbers (if applicable)**
- 7. List of Abbreviations (if applicable)**
- 8. Chapters**
 - Chapter 1 Introduction**
 - Chapter 2 Literature review**
 - Chapter 3 Company profile (if applicable)**
 - Chapter 4 Research Methodology**
 - Chapter 5 Research Analysis and Results**
 - Chapter 6 Findings, Discussion and Recommendations**
 - Chapter 7 Conclusion**
- 9. Bibliography**
- 10. Appendices (if applicable)**

1. Cover Page and Title Page

A model of your thesis cover page is attached at the end. The same can be requested to your thesis supervisor.

2. Thesis Approval Page

A model of your thesis approval page is included at the end

3. Abstract

An abstract is a concise summary of an entire thesis and consists of the condensation of your entire thesis. A good abstract is precise, concise (usually not more than 250 words) and emphasizes the importance of the document. When writing an abstract, make sure you explicitly mention the crux of your thesis. From your abstract a reader should get the essence of your thesis.

Please write and proofread your abstract carefully. When possible, avoid including symbols or foreign words in your abstract, as they cannot be indexed or searched. Avoid mathematical formulas, diagrams, and other illustrative materials in the abstract. Offer a brief description of your thesis or dissertation and a concise summary of its conclusions. Be sure to describe the subject and focus of your work with clear details and avoid including lengthy explanations or opinions.

- Include the heading "ABSTRACT" in all capital letters, and center it 2" below the top of the page.
- Abstracts need not exceed 250 words
- Number the abstract page with the lower case Roman numeral

4. Dedication and Acknowledgements

You have an option to include a dedication and acknowledgements. If you choose to include any or both of these elements, give each its own page(s).

A dedication is a message from the author prefixed to a work in tribute to a person, group, or cause. Most dedications are short statements of tribute beginning with "To..." such as "To my family".

(Do not place a heading on the dedication page. The text of short dedications must be centered and begin 2" from the top of the page.)

Acknowledgements are the author's statement of gratitude to and recognition of the people and institutions that helped the author's research and writing.

(Headings are required for the "ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS". Headings must be in all capital letters and centered 2" below the top of the page.)

5. Table of Contents, with page numbers

Should be prepared in APA style. Students kindly refer the links given at the end of this document for the preparation of Table of Contents as per the APA format

6. List of Tables, List of Figures, or List of Illustrations, with titles and page numbers (if applicable)

Each entry must include a number, title, and page number.

Assign each table, figure, or illustration in your thesis an Arabic numeral. You may number consecutively throughout the entire work (e.g., Figure 1, Figure 2, etc.), or you may assign a two-part Arabic numeral with the first number designating the chapter in which it appears, separated by a period, followed by a second number to indicate its consecutive placement in the chapter (e.g., Table 3.2 is the second table in Chapter Three).

7. List of Abbreviations (if applicable)

If you use abbreviations extensively in your thesis, you must include a list of abbreviations and their corresponding definitions following these guidelines:

1. Include the heading "LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS" in all capital letters, and center it 1" below the top of the page.
2. Include one double-spaced line between the heading and the first entry.
3. Arrange your abbreviations alphabetically.
4. Include one double-spaced line between each entry.
5. The List of Abbreviations page(s) must be numbered with consecutive lower case Roman numerals centered with a 1/2" margin from the bottom edge.

8. CHAPTERS

1. Include the heading of chapters in all capital letters (CHAPTER 1, CHAPTER 2 etc.), and center it 1" below the top of the page.
2. Every chapter should start on a new page.

Note: The entire document should be only one side printed.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The introduction chapter of your thesis outlines its core arguments, hypotheses etc. It is longer than the abstract and contains adequate background information on your topic of interest. Furthermore, it

establishes the relevance of your thesis by highlighting its contribution to the knowledge base of its topic. The introduction chapter

of a thesis should have the following stages:

CHAPTER 1

1.1 The opening section

1.2 Background of the research topic

1.3 Statement of the problem

1.4 Rationale (including the research aims, objectives, and questions)

1.5 Scope of the study

1.6 Significance of the study

1.7 Structure of the document

CHAPTER 2

THE LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review chapter sets the premise of your thesis. It examines and evaluates the research works that's been conducted so far on your thesis topic and passively highlights the contributions of your thesis.

A literature review is a survey of academic sources on a specific subject, providing an overview of current knowledge. You should discuss relevant theories, methods, and gaps in the existing research. Writing a literature review contains finding relevant publications, critically analyzing the sources, and explaining your findings in the literature.

A well-written literature review doesn't only summarize sources, it also aims to analyze, synthesize, and critically evaluate to give a clear picture of the state of knowledge on the topic.

Put forward your review in a logical, chronological, and structured manner to better outline the knowledge gaps in your field of study and how your thesis will fill them.

CHAPTER 3

COMPANY/INDUSTRY PROFILE

If you have chosen a particular company or an industry for your research (which is recommended), you should include a separate chapter for presenting the profile. An ideal structure can be as follows

- 3.1 Introduction to the company/industry
- 3.2 History and Background of the company/industry
- 3.3 Organizational Structure/Industry Structure
- 3.4 Product/Service Offerings
- 3.5 Market Position and Competitors
- 2.7 Strategic Initiatives, goals and current trends

This format provides a clear, in-depth overview and serves as a reference point for your analysis in later chapters.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As the name suggests, the methodology section of a thesis consists of all methods and procedures you have used in your thesis. A well-written methodology accentuates the plausibility of your research methods. In addition, it enables your readers to understand why you chose specific methods and how they are justified for your research.

To garner more credibility, you can include the pitfalls and difficulties associated with your choice of research methods. The methodology section is an unavoidable part of a thesis or a research paper. Considering errors in the methodology section enervates the entire thesis.

Follow the steps below to write a perfect methodology for a thesis:

- a. Give an outline of the research design**
- b. Briefly explain the philosophy behind the research**
- c. Mention the research approach**
- d. Introduce the research methods**
- e. Note the following points to highlight in the methodology. No matter what methodology you have chosen, you have to focus on the following points:**
 - Explain sampling strategy.
 - Clearly state the procedure of the research paper.
 - Mention how you collect the data. (Data collection)

- Explain how data are analyzed for your research. (Data analysis). Suppose you have written in qualitative strategy like thematic analysis, mention the researcher you have followed.
- Mention the validity of the data and result.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND FINDINGS

This section comprises the outcomes of your research work. It includes all the observations you made and the answers to all your hypotheses in the thesis. When writing this chapter, include only factual data and format it to be distinguishable.

Use tables, graphs, subheadings, and generic comments for the results. The aim is to enable your readers to discern the result of your research.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The discussion chapter of your thesis should begin with a brief summarization of the outcome of your research work. It should explain how your results address your hypotheses and highlight any repetitions in your observations. You can also add comments on how you want the readers to interpret your results and about your agreements and disagreements with the available research work in your field.

A discussion chapter in a thesis is a place where you have the chance to delving into the analysis, importance, and relevance of your research. This section focuses on explaining and analyzing what you have researched, presenting how it is associated with the existing literature. It is also a place for argument supporting your entire discussion.

The following helpful tips can help you design a perfect master's thesis with an excellent discussion chapter:

- Start with a short reference to the objective of your thesis
- Refer to hypotheses (If you had one)
- Evaluate your results and compare them with existing studies

The following 5 questions might be helpful to write a sound discussion section:

- How well do you understand the objective of your study?
- What message is conveyed by your results to the readers?
- How do your findings compare to findings in literature?

- Why should your findings matter?
- In what light should your findings be viewed?

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The final section of your document consists of a precise answer to your hypothesis. The “conclusion” chapter of your thesis should stress the achievement of the aims of your thesis. You should also include certain limitations of your research to convey the fact that there is still scope for further research in your field.

9. Bibliography

Bibliography includes all the works you consulted during your research, not just those you cited in your text. This section provides a broader list of materials that were useful in your research process, offering readers insight into the breadth of sources you explored.

You should list first the literature books, peer reviewed journals and articles (minimum of 20).

Characteristics of Bibliography:

- **Broader Scope:** Includes all sources consulted, not just those cited.
- **Exploratory:** Demonstrates the extent of your research and may include sources that provided background information or helped shape your understanding, even if they are not directly quoted.
- **Comprehensive:** May list additional readings that informed your work or that you recommend for further study.
- **Format:** Should be presented in APA format and in Alphabetical order. The bibliography sections should in the order of Books, Articles, Websites, etc.).

10. Appendices (if applicable)

In an MBA research thesis, appendices are used to provide supplementary material that supports your main text but is too detailed or cumbersome to include within the main chapters. Appendices are valuable for providing transparency and additional context, allowing readers to delve deeper into your research if they choose to.

Typical Contents of Appendices in an MBA Research Thesis (*You need not include all, only the relevant contents as you may feel necessary*)

- **Survey Data:** Complete sets of responses from surveys or questionnaires.
- **Interview Transcripts:** Full transcripts of interviews conducted as part of your research.

- **Detailed Tables:** Extensive tables or data sets that support your analysis but are too large for the main body.
- **Survey Instruments:** Copies of the actual questionnaires or surveys used.
- **Interview Questions:** Lists of questions asked during interviews.
- **Detailed Charts:** Additional charts or graphs that support your findings but are not essential to the main text.
- **Infographics:** Visual representations of data that provide further insight.
- **Methodology Details:** More detailed descriptions of your research methods, including sampling techniques, data collection processes, and analytical tools.
- **Calculations and Formulas:** Complex calculations or statistical formulas used in your analysis.
- **Ethical Approvals:** Copies of ethical approval letters or consent forms from participants.
- **Correspondence:** Relevant emails or letters that provide context or support your research process.
- **Extended Literature Reviews:** More detailed discussions of literature that are referenced in summary form in the main text.
- **Supporting Theories:** Extended explanations of theories or models referenced in your thesis.
- **Case Study Material:** Additional case study material or detailed descriptions of case studies included in your research.
- **Prototypes or Models:** Descriptions or images of any prototypes or models used in your research.

Formatting Appendices

- Each appendix should be labeled with a letter (Appendix A, Appendix B, etc.) or a number (Appendix 1, Appendix 2, etc.).
- Ensure each appendix is clearly titled to reflect its content.
- When referring to an appendix in the main text, make sure to mention it explicitly (e.g., "See Appendix A for the survey questionnaire").
- Ensure consistency in how you refer to appendices throughout your thesis.
- Organize appendices in the order they are referenced in the main text.

- Ensure each appendix starts on a new page.

APA FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS

This guide has been taken from the American Psychological Associations Website.

Style Manual

It is recommended that APA Style Seventh Edition is used. It should be in 12-point type using Times New Roman font.

Spacing

The text in the manuscript should be double-spaced. The right margin of the text should not be justified, but kept left-aligned, also known as ragged right, like the text in this guide.

Margins

All margins in the document should be set to 1 inch on each side. The margins must be maintained on all pages, including the appendices. Tables, maps, charts, and illustrations should fall within such margins.

Bias-Free Language

Eliminate biased language from your writing. Avoid perpetuating prejudicial beliefs or demeaning attitudes. Instead, use bias-free language to describe all people and their personal characteristics with inclusivity and respect, including:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Participation in research
- Racial and ethnic identity
- Sexual orientation
- Socioeconomic status
- Intersectionality

For guidelines on how to write about people without bias and examples of bias-free language, see the Bias-Free Language link on the last page.

Professional Title Page The professional title page includes the paper title, author names (the byline), author affiliation(s), author note, running head, and page number, as shown in the following example.

(‘TITLE OF THE FINAL THESIS’)

**A Thesis Submitted in the Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Business Administration/Bachelor of Business Administration**

Submitted By,
(Name of the Student)

Month, year

Place

Thesis Approval/Signature

All content should be in Times New Roman and 12 pt font, with the exception of the Copyright label itself being 11 pt font.

We hereby approve the thesis

(‘TITLE OF THE THESIS’)

Of

(Name of the student)

Candidate for the Degree:

Master of Business Administration

Certified by:

Date:

Links for further resources

Additional reference guides are available at: <https://apastyle.apa.org/>

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html

<https://gradschool.unc.edu/academics/thesis-diss/guide/format.html>

Purdue University has a comprehensive Writing Lab:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html

In-Test Citation Checklist: <https://apastyle.apa.org/instructional-aids/in-text-citation-checklist.pdf>

Bias-Free Language: <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/bias-free-language/>

Creating an APA Style Reference List: <https://apastyle.apa.org/instructional-aids/creating-reference-list.pdf>

Center for Writing Excellence - APA Resources: <https://www.montclair.edu/center-for-writing-excellence/cwe-digital-dashboard/resources-for-writers/citing-sources/#APA>