

## Thesis Format and Guidelines for Preparation of the Thesis

Preparing an MPhil/PhD thesis is a systematic process that starts in the first year and finishes with submitting the final hard-bound thesis after the viva voce examination. To get satisfactory results, it is important to work consistently, develop the research argument by reading and analyzing the literature, design and develop the methodology for the empirical research, collect data, analyze data, and prepare the final thesis. The work on the thesis must be started in the first year. Students are expected to meet the programme learning outcomes and follow the activities in the programme timeline.

The thesis for the Degree of Master of Philosophy must consist of (Check word limits with PGU) words, and the thesis of the Doctor of Philosophy must consist of (Check word limits with PGU) words (excluding tables, figures and references). The thesis shall incorporate necessary tables and figures and be prepared according to the guidelines of FGS.

See below for (a) preliminary pages, (b) structure of the thesis, and (c) technical pointers in preparing the thesis.

### (a) Preliminary Pages

Thesis components	Thesis structure requirements
Title page	Thesis Title, the name and registration number of the candidate, Month and year of submission, Faculty and the University.
Declaration by Candidate and approval of Supervisor/s	A separate page must be dedicated to the candidate's declaration. See section (c) for technical pointers for the statement of declaration and superior certification statement to be included in the thesis.
Acknowledgement	Acknowledgement statement.
Abstract	Present the study's purpose, design/ methodology/approach, findings, and originality (maximum one page).
Abbreviations	Used abbreviations with their full form should be provided.
Contents	List of chapter titles, sections, and subsections with page numbers
List of tables	A list of tables should be provided with specific page numbers.
List of Figures	A list of figures should be provided with specified page numbers.
Numbering of Preliminary pages	All pages from the beginning up to chapter one should be numbered using Roman numerals.

## (b) Structure of the thesis chapters

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chapter 1 Introduction</b></p>	<p><b>For quantitative studies</b></p> <p>1.1. Background</p> <p>[Relevance of the topic and the necessity for scientific investigation, motives for choosing a particular topic]</p> <p>1.2. Research problem [highlighting the research gaps]</p> <p>1.3. Research questions and objectives</p> <p>1.4. Research methodology [a brief description of the methodology employed in the study]</p> <p>1.5. Theoretical, methodological, and practical significance and originality of the study</p> <p>1.6. Limitations of the study</p> <p>1.7. Structure of the thesis: [A paragraph indicating the main contribution of each chapter and how do they relate to the main body of the study)</p> <p><b>For qualitative studies</b></p> <p>1.1. Background</p> <p>1.2. Motivation for the study</p> <p>1.3. Situating the research [locating your research in a particular domain/field of literature and in particular identified debate/s to identify the research gap]</p> <p>1.4. Theoretical inspirations and research questions</p> <p>1.5. Originality of the study</p> <p>1.6. Organization of the thesis</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chapter 2 Literature Review</b></p> <p>[or any other heading appropriate to your domain/field and literature]</p>	<p>This chapter should start with an introduction [connecting to the previous chapter and informing the reader what to expect in this chapter - especially the research gap identified] and end with a summary [informing the reader of the key arguments made in the chapter and the connection to the next chapter].</p> <p>This chapter should demonstrate the student's expertise, intellectual capabilities and ability to critically review the existing body of literature relating to the research issue under investigation [showing</p>

	<p>the reader what research has been done and the gaps that remain to be studied].</p> <p>This should be mainly based on refereed Journal articles. Students could also cite evidence from discussion papers and monographs [if relevant to their domain].</p>
<p><b>Chapter 3 Theoretical Foundation</b></p> <p>(Or any other heading as appropriate to your domain/field/theory]</p>	<p>Similar to the previous chapter, this chapter too should start with an introduction and end with a summary.</p> <p><b>For quantitative studies:</b></p> <p>This chapter should explicitly explain the key conceptual terms used in the thesis. It should cover accepted theories and concepts used in the literature. Further, the student has to develop a theoretical conceptual framework based on relevant theory/ies or literature with a logical flow of arguments leading to hypotheses.</p> <p><b>For qualitative studies:</b></p> <p>This chapter should present the appropriate theory/ies/framework of analysis of the study and argue and justify why the study selected this particular theory/ies or a framework of analysis to address the identified research gap [justification for the suitability of the theory/ies selected]. Further, how was the theory/ies or the analysis framework used in the study? Then, it presented and discussed the theoretical notions/concepts that the study uses to theorize the findings of the study.</p> <p>*This chapter may not be required for students drawing on Grounded Theory as a methodology.</p>
<p><b>Chapter 4 Research Methodology</b></p>	<p>Similar to previous chapters, this chapter too should start with an introduction and end with a summary.</p> <p><b>For quantitative studies:</b></p> <p>This chapter should deal with methodological aspects of the study i.e. the philosophical position of the researcher, choice of research methods, rationale behind the selection of methods, data sources, research design, data collection instruments and measures to ensure validity and reliability, and analytical techniques and ethical considerations of the study.</p> <p><b>For qualitative studies:</b></p> <p>This chapter should discuss the philosophical and methodological position of the study and connect the selected research design to it.</p>

	<p>Further, it should include details of the methods used by the researcher in conducting the research, the ethical considerations, details on the fieldwork [especially for empirical research including challenges encountered], and how the researcher was able to maintain reflexivity, and other requirements ensuring the quality of the qualitative study.</p>
<p><b>Chapter 5 Analysis and Results/Findings</b></p> <p>[or any other heading as appropriate to your study – it could be even two or more chapters of analysis]</p>	<p>Like previous chapters, all analysis chapters should start with an introduction and end with a summary.</p> <p><b>For quantitative research:</b></p> <p>The answers to the formulated research questions should be examined logically, paying attention to the literature's theoretical foundations and empirical evidence. The data should be processed with the identified tools and techniques. The results/findings should be presented using appropriate visualization tools (e.g. tables, figures, images, charts etc.).</p> <p><b>For qualitative research:</b></p> <p>This chapter/s should be organized by drawing on the theoretical notions/theories or the framework of analysis presented in Chapter 3, where the quoted interview data/ narratives/documentary reviews/photographs/pictures/ reflections of the researcher during fieldwork, etc. are presented under these theoretical notions/theories/frameworks of analysis and discussed to answer the research questions raised in Chapter 1.</p>
<p><b>Chapter 6 Discussion and Conclusion</b></p> <p>[This could be one chapter or two separate chapters as Discussion and Conclusion]</p>	<p>This chapter should start with a summary that includes the research issue, research questions, the methodology adopted in the analysis, and the key findings (summarizes the study's main results). Then, a section will be provided to discuss the findings in light of other research and new insights from your study.</p> <p>The conclusion section should present the conclusions based on the study's key findings. This chapter also must have a section on contributions of the study [to selected literature/ debates in your research domain], implications of the study [to theory/methodology and practice - or as appropriate for your study], and directions for future research.</p>

	<p><b>If you opt for two separate chapters as discussion and conclusion:</b></p> <p>The discussion chapter should include an introduction to the chapter, a discussion of the analysis of findings in light of other research in your selected research domain and how the research questions were answered, implications of the study [to theory and practice or policy - as appropriate], and a summary at the end.</p> <p>The conclusion chapter should include a brief summary of the study, conclusions based on the findings of the research, the contributions of the study [to selected literature/ debates in your research domain], and directions for future research.</p>
<b>Footnotes/Endnotes</b>	Explanatory notes should be presented as footnotes/endnotes.
<b>References</b>	All in-text citations should have a corresponding entry in the reference list. Please follow the latest version of APA or Harvard Guidelines or a reference style prescribed in your disciplinary area of study.
<b>Appendices</b>	Include appendices at the end of the final thesis as attachments if they enhance the value of your work.

Note: While we prescribe this format in crafting your thesis, a certain degree of flexibility must be given to your research supervisor/s in accommodating any changes appropriately.

### **(c) Technical pointers for the final thesis**

Final thesis must be printed on the standard A4 format paper (210x297 mm), with the following page settings:

1. Font 12, Times New Roman
2. Line spacing 1.5
3. Margins: 1.5 inch on the left and 1 inch on all other sides
4. Page numbering (in Arabic numbers) should start from Chapter one to the last page of the thesis.
5. Page number should appear on the bottom of the page, in center, without a dot.
6. Every new chapter should start on a new page with the chapter number and heading. Paragraphs and subsections should start in the same page.

7. The list of references and annexures should also start on a new page.
8. The section headings should be in capital letters. The subsection and paragraph headings should only start with a capital letter.
9. All headings must be in bold letters and Left-aligned.
10. The sections and subsections of the text should be numbered using Arabic numbers. Numbering of subsections should start in every section (e.g. 2.1, 2.2; 3.1, 3.2). If the text is separated into paragraphs, they should be numbered using the same principle (e.g.: 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3), if applicable. Levels of headings should be limited to three.
11. Every table, picture, figure, image or graph etc. should have a caption with the source identified. These must be numbered in identification with the chapter number and the serial number (e.g.: the first table appeared in chapter 1 should be numbered as Table 1.1, the second table as 1.2).
12. The font size of tables, pictures, figures, images, graphs etc. does not have to match the font size of the main text. The table title should be left-aligned and written in parallel line to the table number. The number and the title of the picture, figure or graph should appear below the object.
13. Tables or graphical objects should be compact and take up not more than a page. If there are any problems of fitting there they can also be presented vertically in the page. In this case, the title of the object should be on the left-hand side. Student should consider adding bigger objects as the attachments (annexures), instead of presenting them in the text.
14. Annexures should have their own numbering. If the table or a graph in the annexures do not fit in one page, there should be an additional indication on both pages, for instance "Table 5 is continued in the next page" and "continuation of table 5".
15. Formulae used in the text should be numbered. The number should be in parentheses and on the right side of the line, which contains the formula.
16. Final submission following viva voce examination must include relevant revisions and considerations based on comments/reports by the examiners.
17. On approval of the final submission, three (3) bound copies and in the soft form (single sided) must be submitted to the Faculty. The final submitted version must be bound in a Black Hardcover with Gold letters. A model of the front cover and lettering along the spine of the thesis is given in the following pages.
18. Technical pointers on declaration statement and supervisor certification statement are given below.

## **DECLARATION**

I certify that this dissertation does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or Diploma in any University or higher education institute, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain any material previously published, written by another person or developed with the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools except where due reference is made in the text.

(Name of the candidate)

(Reg number)

Date

## **Supervisors' Certification**

I approve the research thesis titled " .." by..... (name)..... (Reg #) for the submission to the Postgraduate Unit, Faculty of Arts and Culture, South Eastern University of Sri Lanka, in fulfilment of the final research thesis requirement for a Doctor of Philosophy.

(Signature). .....

Date: .....

Professor .....

Supervisor

Affiliation

(Signature). .....

Date: .....

Professor .....

Supervisor

Affiliation

19. The cover page for soft-bound submissions should be presented as follows (excluding the any page borders).

[TITLE in Font Times New Roman - size 16]

NAME IN Full-size 12]

[Registration Number - size 12]

Upgrading/Pre-Submission/Final Thesis submitted to the Postgraduate Unit, Faculty of Arts  
and Culture, South Eastern University of Sri Lanka, for the Degree  
of Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy

[MONTH & YEAR (e.g.. December 2025)]



20. The final hard-bound cover page should be presented as follows.

<b>Name of the Degree Programme</b>	<p>[TITLE in Font Times New Roman-size 14]</p> <p>[NAME IN FULL and Registration No. – Size 12]</p> <p>Name of the Degree</p> <p>The Postgraduate Unit Faculty of Arts and Culture South Eastern University of Sri Lanka Sri Lanka</p> <p>[YEAR]</p>
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