Glasgow Caledonian University

University for the Common Good

Research Degrees Committee

Guidelines for thesis preparation [updated April 2024]

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1. INTRODUCTION

Towards the end of the period of research, supervisors begin thinking about possible examiners and research candidates begin the final stages of thesis preparation. In addition to the academic content of the thesis, the layout is also subject to certain University Regulations.
Although it is no longer compulsory for all theses to conform to the British Standards BS4821 (1990), these recommendations can provide a helpful benchmark when considering the final format of your thesis.

All theses are submitted for examination in electronic format (.pdf or .docx) but should still conform to the required layout as detailed below. The electronic copy of the thesis must be forwarded by the student, together with the RDC8 form to the Senior Registry Officer in Academic Registry at least 6 weeks before the viva. It should **NOT** be sent directly to the examiner/s. A copy of the final, corrected version must be supplied to the University before any award letter can be issued (see *Regulations for the award of research degrees by Glasgow Caledonian University; Sections 7.60 – 7.65).*

The writing up of research degree theses can seem a daunting prospect. Often there can be a great deal of data that has been accumulated and analysed during a research project. Making sense of your data can often be made more manageable by breaking down or collating data s e t s into chapters, with headings of your choice. Each chapter can itself be broken down further into numbered sections. Planning these sequentially numbered chapter and section headings in advance of writing can be of benefit in organizing thoughts and ideas, as well as helping to m a k e sure that you develop a coherent thesis plan. Students can begin planning their research degree thesis at any time during the research period.

The current University assessment regulations for higher degrees and associated policies may also provide helpful advice: https://www.gcu.ac.uk/research/graduateschool/theresearchstudenthandbook (accessed 10/04/2024).

Theses for research degrees are submitted for examination in electronic form (.pdf or .docx) but should still conform to the required layout for your discipline. Your Director of Studies should be able to provide further details of how research degree theses should be formatted and presented in your specific disciplines. Care should be taken to ensure that formatting allows for sufficient margins at top, bottom, left and right sides, together with an appropriate gutter margin, which may be needed for binding purposes, should you choose to obtain a printed version.

Research degree theses are presented in A4 portrait format using sequentially numbered pages (excluding the thesis title page) and divided into appropriately sized units, or chapters. Each chapter should relate to a single theme. Chapters, sections and sub-sections should be sequentially numbered using Arabic numerals and a hierarchical system (e.g. chapter 1; section 1.1; sub-section 1.11). Each chapter should begin on a new page, with the chapter number and title included. Typically, research degree theses should be produced in portrait mode, using 12-

point font of Arial/Calibri/Times New Roman style with 1.5 line spacing. Particular care should be taken to ensure that formatting allows for sufficient margins at top, bottom, left and right sides, together with an appropriate gutter margin, which may be needed for binding purposes, should printing of the thesis ever be required.

2. THE BRITISH STANDARD

The following guidelines are adapted from the British Standard concerning the preparation of thesis (British Standards Institution specification BS 4821 (1990).

2.1 Definition of a Thesis

A thesis as "[a] statement of investigation or research, presenting the author's findings and any conclusions reached, submitted in support of the author's candidature for a research degree, professional qualification or other award." Aside from meeting this general criterion, doctoral candidates should bear in mind that theses are read, stored, printed and copied, and should be designed, prepared and produced for such use.

2.2 Presentation of Text and Illustrations

It is essential that the presentation of a thesis follows the conventions of the discipline. However, there are conventions that are common to all disciplines. For example, italic script and esoteric or idiosyncratic fonts should not be used merely for decorative effect. Acceptable fonts for the production of academic text are: Times New Roman, Calibri and Arial. Some formatting programmes use Trebuchet MS, this is also acceptable. As a general guideline, quotations should not be set in italics, nor should capital letters be used for long passages. Unusually wide line spacing (e.g. triple spacing) should be avoided. Consistent forms of language, spelling, numbering, symbols, etc. should be used throughout a thesis. The expectation in UK universities is that Standard British English should be used, including standard British spelling (e.g. colour not color, labour not labor). However, in exceptional cases where US spelling and grammar are used, it should be consistent throughout the text. It is recommended that a glossary of specialist terms and a list of abbreviations used is included in the thesis document.

The thesis should be checked and/or proofread for spelling and accuracy, including cross-references and sequences of numbers, before submission. The author of the thesis is responsible for any errors and examiners are entitled to reject or return any thesis where the presentation, including the standard of English language, punctuation and grammar, is such that it impedes understanding or does not meet the requirements of study at doctoral level.

The text and, wherever possible, all the material of the thesis including illustrations, should be presented in A4 profile format. The font size for the main body of the text should be 12 point and headings/subheadings should not exceed 14-point text size. In the main body of the text line-spacing should be set at 1.5 although double spacing may be used if/where deemed necessary.

The thesis should be divided into appropriate units such as chapters, sections and sub-sections. Every chapter should begin on a new page.

The margin on the binding edge of the page (i.e. the left-hand edge of a recto and the right-hand edge of a verso) should not be less than 40 mm. Other margins should be not less than 15 mm. The font size and line length should also be considered when deciding margin width. Running heads and page numbers should be within the recommended margins. The margins around all illustrations and off-prints should normally be no smaller than those of the text.

Page numbers should be visibly clear of the text, preferably in the top or bottom outer corner o f each page. The pages of the thesis should be numbered in a single sequence beginning with the title page, which should be counted but not numbered, and including pages that carry tables, illustrations, appendices, etc. The use of blank pages should be avoided if possible. If there are any, they should carry the work 'BLANK' and the page number. Running heads are not essential, but where used they should give the author's name, with initials, year of submission and chapter number or heading. A running head should form the top line of the page, well clear of all other matter, and be set in a smaller font size (10 point) than the main text. A running head should not appear on preliminary pages or chapter openings and may be omitted from pages with full-page illustrations.

Footnotes should be clearly separated from the main text and from each other. They may be in a smaller font size than the main text and more closely spaced.

Paragraphs should be set flush left with an additional line space between paragraphs (e.g. in one-and-a-half line spacing, three-line spaces between paragraphs). Arabic, rather than Roman, numerals should normally be used for numbering all sequences within a thesis.

If tables are used within a thesis, they should be designed with care so that they fit the format o f the thesis. If tables are integrated into the text, as opposed to presented in appendices, each should appear as near as possible to the first reference to it in the text. If there are many tables, they may be collected at the end of the text, possibly as an appendix. Each table should have a number and title, which should appear beneath the table.

2.3 Bibliography/Reference List
A bibliographical reference should be given for every work, published or unpublished, cited in the text; this is normally referred to as a Reference List. A Bibliography (if included) should list all works consulted in the process of creating the thesis whether they are cited in the text or not. Candidates should seek advice from their supervisory teams about the preferred systems for their disciplines.

A consistent form of presentation, for example the Harvard Referencing System, APA or Numeric Referencing, should be used for all bibliographical references throughout the thesis. Certain disciplines have their own rules, and it is essential that candidates seek advice to ensure that they are using the correct conventions.

2.4 The Title Page

The title page of every volume should give the following information in the order listed:

(a) the full title of the thesis and any subtitle.
(b) the total number of volumes, if more than one, and the number of the volume.
(c) the full name of the author, followed, if desired, by any qualifications and distinctions.
(d) the qualification for which the thesis is submitted.
(e) the name of the organisation to which the thesis is submitted.
(f) the month and year of submission.

2.5 Other Sections
- An abstract should follow the title page. It should provide a synopsis of the thesis, stating the nature and scope of work undertaken and the contribution made to knowledge in the subject treated. It should appear on its own on a single page.
- The list of contents should follow the abstract.
- The list of illustrations and tables should follow the list of contents.
- A list of abbreviations may follow the list of contents.
- A list of any material intended to be removed may also follow the above.
- If a preface is included, it should precede the acknowledgements, if both are included separately. The preface or acknowledgement should include reasons for undertaking the study as well as acknowledgement of assistance, for example, support such as scholarships and grants, consultations and discussions with supervisors and colleagues. If there is no preface, the acknowledgement should have its own heading.
- Appendices may consist of material of considerable length or of lists, documents, commentaries, tables or other evidence that, if included in the main text, would interrupt its flow.
- If there is a glossary, it should follow the text and any appendices.
- The list of references should follow the glossary if it is included.
- The bibliography, if any, should follow the list of references.

2.6 Sequence
Adherence to the organization outlined in Section 2.5 should result in the following sequence in a single-volume thesis:

- Title and subtitle
- Abstract (on separate page)
- List of contents
- List of abbreviations
- List of tables, illustrations, etc.
- List of accompanying material
- Preface

- Acknowledgement
- Author's declaration
- Definitions
- Text, divided into chapters, sections, etc. Appendices (in single-volume thesis) Glossary
- List of references
- Bibliography
- Index (if included)

2.7 Copies and Distribution

An electronic (.pdf or .docx) copy of the thesis must be forwarded by the candidate to Academic Registry at least 6 weeks before the intended date of the examination together with the form RDC8. Theses should **NOT** be sent directly to the examiners.

A copy of the final, corrected version must be supplied to the University before any award letter can be issued (see *Regulations for the award of research degrees by Glasgow Caledonian University; Sections 7.60 – 7.65)*.

3. THE UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS

These guidelines must be read in conjunction with the University's Regulations for the Award of Research Degrees by Glasgow Caledonian University. Sections 7 – 10 apply.

Where the University's regulations differ from BS 4821 in points of detail, a candidate should be guided thus:

1. Theses/portfolio shall normally be in A4 format; the Research Degrees Committee may give permission for a thesis/portfolio to be submitted in another format where it is satisfied that the contents of the thesis/portfolio can be better expressed in that f o r m a t ; a candidate using a format larger than A4 should note that the university cannot guarantee the availability of full-size enlargements if printing is required.
2. The font size of character used in the main text, including displayed matter and notes, shall not be less than 2.0 mm for capitals and 1.5 mm for x-height (that is, the height of lower-case x).
3. One-and-a-half spacing or double spacing where necessary shall be used in the typescript except for indented quotations or footnotes where single spacing may be used.
4. Pages shall be numbered consecutively through the main text with photographs and/or diagrams included as whole pages.
5. The title page shall give the following information:
   a. the full title of the thesis/portfolio
   b. the full name of the author
   c. that the degree is awarded by the University
   d. the award for which the degree is submitted in partial fulfilment of its requirements.
   e. the Collaborating Establishment(s), if any, and
   f. the month and year of submission.

4.   WHERE A PRINTED VERSION IS REQUIRED

Formatting of the thesis should follow the guidance given in Sections 2.1-2.7 and Section 3.

If printing the thesis, paper used for the text should be of a substance within the range of 70 g/m^2 to 100 g/m^2. The paper should be white to be easy to read and reproduce. Text should be printed recto (i.e. on the right-hand page of an open book only). Text for illustrations or tables, may be required to be versos (left hand page of an open book) to allow a diagram to face related text). In the latter case, the verso should be numbered as facing the recto, e.g. "facing page 13" or "fp 13."

If it is necessary to present an illustration on a paper size larger than A4, it should be produced on paper that can be folded to fit within the thesis. If possible, such an illustration should be mounted on an A4-size guard. The binder should be asked to advise on an appropriate format for presentation, if there are likely to be several large illustrations. Illustrations should be not pasted across both pages of an open volume. Material that cannot conveniently be bound near the related text, should be packaged in such a way that it can be bound with the thesis, stored in a pocket attached to the inside back cover of the appropriate volume.

The margin on the binding edge of the page (i.e. the left-hand edge of a recto and the right-hand edge of a verso) should not be less than 40 mm. Other margins should be not less than 15 mm. The font size and line length should also be considered when deciding margin width. Running heads and page numbers should be within the recommended margins. The margins around all illustrations and off-prints should normally be no smaller than those of the text.

The title of the thesis should be given on the cover. Titles or words in non-roman characters should be converted to the roman alphabet. Arabic numerals are acceptable, but other symbols in non-roman characters (e.g. some mathematical symbols) should not be used in spine or c o v e r titles.

The candidate's name should be in the form registered with Glasgow Caledonian University. A specimen thesis cover showing the appropriate layout is shown on page 10 of this document. Any lettering on the spine and cover should be large enough to be legible when the volume is o n a library shelf. Normally, lettering of 8 mm capital height will be required if the lettering is all in capitals and 10 mm capital height if capitals and lower case are used. The spine should bear the surname and initials of the candidate, the year of submission and the volume number if the work consists of more than one volume.

5.   THESIS BINDING (where required)

The following companies are located in Glasgow and have prepared theses to GCU regulations in the past. Other companies may be available.

Cameron Bookbinders
103 Commerce St
Glasgow G5 8DL
Tel. 0141 429 7333
fraser@cameronbookbinders.co.uk
http://www.cameronbookbinders.co.uk

Downie Allison Downie (Bookbinders and Printers)
Unit H
Purdon St
Glasgow G11 6AF
Tel. 0141 339 0333
mail@dadbookbinders.com
http://www.dadbookbinders.com

Appendix – example coversheet

THE ORIGINS OF MICROCREDIT FINANCE POLICY AND PRACTICE

ANDREA BANKER (B.Ed; MSc.)

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements of Glasgow Caledonian University
for the degree of Master [or Doctor] of Philosophy

This research programme was carried out in collaboration
with Tesco Bank
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