

# Thesis Writing in Ethiopia: Student Guidebook

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# Thesis Writing in Ethiopia: Student Guidebook

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Please download, copy, and distribute this guidebook for discussion and debate at your university.

We encourage universities in Ethiopia to share and discuss this thesis guidebook for academic rigor, uniformity, style, and format of master's theses.

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## About the authors

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Thomas Syre, Sr. is a retired associate professor of health care administration from James Madison University. He served as a U.S. Peace Corps volunteer with the WHO Smallpox Eradication Program during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie I. Since university retirement, he has periodically returned to Ethiopia as a volunteer professor and guest lectured, edited theses, and advised students in MPH and Ph.D. programs. His diplomas include a B.S.Ed., MPH, and Ph.D.

# An invitation and challenge to students

Dear student:

We invite you on a unique academic journey. We challenge you to action.

Writing a thesis is an academic journey like no other. It is a long, intellectually challenging, and sometimes exasperating journey to scholarship. You have written research-based papers for classes in your university setting. However, a thesis takes you on a new and different trip, and it will empower you with new skills and knowledge. Thesis writing will mature you, and the journey from beginning to end can be one of the greatest successes in your life.

Maybe you are a health practitioner with a hospital, an administrator of a non-government or international organization, or you seek promotion in a major business enterprise. Alternatively, maybe you're a rising academic—an instructor or lecturer—in the university and college world and plan to research and teach. Regardless of your status or plans, you must be able to express your ideas clearly and without ambiguity. You will develop scholarship and skills with a thesis experience.

Thesis writing improves your writing skills. It is not enough to be an expert on statistical software and testing, data manipulation, research design, or subject matter. Scholars must have a command of the English language and express themselves in written format. With commitment, effort, and time, you will become a better writer.

From reading and editing hundreds of theses at Ethiopian universities and institutes, we know there is a need for this guidebook. We have come to understand the strengths of these theses, but also the problems. We discuss many of these problems and their solutions in this guidebook.

We wrote this guidebook based on our experience of working with many master's degree students in the preparation of a thesis. We have participated as evaluators in over one hundred oral thesis defenses. Our evaluation of these theses revealed a broad range of scholarship, research rigor, and English language use. The thesis format, style, content, and English language use varied widely within and across universities. The oral defenses ranged in quality from remarkable scholarship to embarrassment for the student.

A few of the theses examined were opinion papers in large font written in clumsy English with outdated citations and references. These theses had little academic value. Some were duplicated research studies from older theses. Happily, however, many were exemplary. They were carefully prepared and contributed to knowledge in Ethiopia and beyond. These carefully crafted theses were written in a recognizable style, a logical format, and in English that could be understood and appreciated by the readers. These theses are what you should strive to achieve.

## Guidebook contents

This guidebook is about what a thesis looks like and what it includes. It tackles what a thesis writer needs to accomplish to create a praiseworthy thesis, what the reader can learn from the thesis, and how your thesis can become your best work.

The guidebook discusses style and format issues, the structure of the proposal, and citations and references. It also covers plagiarism and English language advice for Ethiopian writers, as well as practical tips for thesis advisor selection and websites that can help you with thesis writing and language.

A six-part guidebook, the first part presents the visuals of style and format—fonts, margins, headings and subheadings, line spacing and paragraph format, page numbering and setup, and table and figure presentation. Language tips are also offered.

The second part discusses thesis proposal writing with the understanding that a well-organized, logically conceptualized, and well-written thesis proposal leads to a better thesis. The sections of a thesis proposal are discussed from the cover page to the thesis proposal approval sheet.

Thesis writing is the third part. The structure of the thesis, the sections—from the cover page to the approval sheet—and the contents of each chapter are all explained.

Part four of the guidebook discusses citations and references. Complete references in the proper style are required for a passing thesis, and a comprehensive literature search of your topic and research questions will yield dozens of sources. These sources will be included in the thesis proposal and thesis as citations and references. Proper presentation of these sources is expected in a thesis. The formatting of these citations will follow the style approved by the university.

Academic ethics, plagiarism, and plagiarism detection websites are discussed in part five. Listed are websites and software packages that can help in your writing and tracking sources to avoid unintentional plagiarism.

Finally, the oral thesis defense is a memorable event. Part six discusses this defense and emphasizes the need for preparation to be successful.

## Call to action

As a student with the responsibility of completing a thesis as partial fulfillment of your master's degree, you should do the following at your institution:

- Ask for a meeting of students and academics to discuss the format and style of a thesis. Ideally, this conversation is conducted on a yearly basis or more often.
- Ask the university to duplicate and distribute an official thesis guidebook or similar document and make it available to students and academic staff members. Thesis style and format should not be a mystery, but readily known among students. The institution can distribute copies to the academic staff members who advise master's students with completing a thesis.
- Ask the university to upload the approved guidebook to your institution's website for easy access and reference. You may also request the creation of a Facebook page for the thesis documents and student's experiences with and advice on the process.



- Create a thesis writing support group in your department or college. Writing a thesis can lead to isolation. Mutual support of other thesis researchers is often absent. However, it does not have to be this way. Find other students in your department or college and form a small group to talk about progress and encourage writing. Also, read each other's thesis drafts and comment on them, knowing that if you have problems with content, style, or format, the advisors and thesis evaluators surely will. Thesis student support groups are common in the United States and Europe, and they contribute to enhanced scholarship, improved collaboration skills, and build writing discipline.

## Closing

Writing a thesis is an opportunity to learn and a chance to become a scholar. The thesis is not an added duty for the master's degree; it is the capstone scholarship experience for earning your master's degree and, from start to submission, it will take several hundred hours and many months to complete. Embrace this invitation for the journey with enthusiasm. It can be a positive life-changing educational experience.

Enjoy the journey.

Thomas Syre, Jr. & Thomas Syre, Sr.

## What is a thesis?

A thesis is a formal research-based document that adds new knowledge to a discipline. A thesis does not retell facts that have already been assembled and shared; it presents new knowledge. It demonstrates your knowledge of a subject matter, your analytical thinking abilities, researching expertise, and writing skills. It is a unique document of your scholarship in the master's course of study.

The purpose of a thesis is to research a relevant and unexplored issue, establish a viewpoint on an attribute of this issue, and present compelling evidence through investigating the literature. It usually involves planned data collection, statistical analyses, detailed examination, and a discussion of research findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Thesis topic consideration and approval are critical. The rehashing of previous research with minimal new knowledge is a waste of time, energy, money, and other resources. The topic should be relevant. Determining your thesis topic requires significant research.

In contrast to other types of university and college papers where the professor does not see your work until you submit it as a final product, a thesis evolves from idea conceptualization to a final thesis through a cooperative effort among your thesis advisors and you. You develop and maintain a collaborative team effort with your thesis advisors.

The proposal topic is formally approved before you begin your thesis research. This approval ensures that you have a thesis statement and a grasp of the objectives. The research is not duplicative, too broad, too narrow, or too simple. Throughout research and writing, the advisors evaluate the thesis proposal and thesis in progress and make recommendations for improvements.

Depending on the subject matter and data collection methods, your work on a thesis consumes as much as an academic year. With a relevant topic, excellent research activities, and meaningful findings, you can plan to publish your work in a peer-reviewed journal or other credible publication with your thesis advisors.

## Part 1. Style and format

A thesis should have a consistent style and format, with the writing following established language guidelines. The style and format guidelines on the following pages are those used in universities in Ethiopia, the United States, Canada, Australia, and other nations. Often, institutions will have a thesis style and format tailored to varied disciplines. Check with your professors and confirm it with the accepting thesis office at the institution. Universities and colleges in Ethiopia should have a readily-available document or a website that outlines thesis style and format.

Scholarly writing in English can be a challenge if it is your second, third, or fourth language. Thesis writing provides you the opportunity to enhance your writing skills. Ask your thesis advisors, English-first colleagues, and others with strong writing skills to read your proposal and thesis drafts and make editorial comments. Make it a learning process.

Thesis writers who pursue a master's degree often choose careers as academic staff members at universities in Ethiopia. Enhance your writing skills through thesis writing so you may help future students with their writing.

### Font

Times New Roman 12-point font is used in writing the body of a thesis unless otherwise instructed by the university. A second choice is Calibri 12-point font. Do not use multiple fonts in proposals or theses; one font type is used throughout. Present the cover and title pages in 14-point bold font and 14-point font for first level headings with no bolding of text. Use only black font color. Underline website addresses and ensure they too are black.

### Margins

Use a margin of 3.0 cm on the left side of the page for binding purposes. The right, top, and bottom margins should have 2.5 cm of space. Apply the same margin dimensions to all pages. Margins do not vary with figures or tables. Every page of the proposal and thesis follow these margin rules.

### Headings and subheadings

Write each title of the chapter in bold uppercase letters. The text of the chapter titles is centered on the page.

Number chapter headings with Arabic numerals starting from 1 for the introduction and end with 7 or 8 for the appendix. Arabic numerals are followed by a period, a space, and the chapter title without the word 'chapter' included—i.e., 1. Introduction.

Number the second level headings, or subheadings, consecutively with Arabic numerals in an outline numbering system—i.e., 1.1, 1.2, etc. Use the outline numbering system for lower-level headings—i.e., 1.1.1, 1.1.2, etc. To have a numbered subheading, there must be at least two subheadings under the higher-level heading.

For second-level headings, capitalize the first letter of each word. Write the lower-level headings in sentence case format. Capitalize only the first letter of the heading unless otherwise required by grammatical or nomenclature rules.

Align second-level and lower-level heading text to the left. Separate the headings from the narrative with an extra line. Do not underline or italicize headings, subheadings, or captions of tables or figures. Follow the language rules for underlining and italicizing. Visit websites like [www.grammarly.com/handbook](http://www.grammarly.com/handbook), [www.scribens.com](http://www.scribens.com), or [www.languagetool.org](http://www.languagetool.org) for advice.

## Line spacing and paragraph format

The line spacing for narrative text is 1.5 lines. This spacing allows for easier reading. However, apply single-line spacing to captions of tables and figures. Keep an extra line (1.5 lines of space) between paragraphs above and below headings, subheadings, and captions. Justify the narrative text in block paragraph format. Use block paragraph format throughout the document.

## Page numbering and setup

Begin each section of the thesis on a new page. Assign a number to every page of the thesis proposal and thesis except the cover page. Use small Roman numerals—i.e., ii, iii, iv, etc.—for the preliminary sections (title page to the page preceding the Introduction). Do not number the title page. Use Arabic numerals from the first page of the introduction to the last page of the appendix. Center the page numbers at the bottom of each of the pages in 12-point font. Do not include periods or dashes with the page numbers.

Decide on the best way to present your data. Do not use tables and figures for the same data discussed in the narrative. Tables and figures add to and do not duplicate information. Put borders above and below the column headings, and below the last row of the table. Bold the headings within the tables and figures. Place tables and figures logically and near the first citation in the narrative. Limit the tables and figures to single pages; multiple pages of tables and figures confuse the reader and make data interpretation difficult. Tables and figures should give critical explanatory information to the thesis and not act as additions to the thesis.

Confirm computational correctness. For example, do you have total percentages of 103 or 99? Check the data and arithmetic computations. The numerical values cited in the narrative must match those in the tables. Show significance levels with an asterisk.

Give tables and figures a clear and concise caption. Use table notes to describe the contents of the caption with superscripted numbers. For readability, use landscape rather than portrait orientation. Do not use more than two paragraph spaces between tables and figures and the narrative text. Present the tables and figures clearly—they are self-explanatory.

## Additional style and format issues

Here is some advice on how to avoid common style and format issues:

- Write scientific names in the italic font with the genus name starting with a capital letter.

- The species epithet appears in lowercase letters.
- Do not italicize English language words.
- Give all measurements in metric units.
- Use the Ethiopian Birr (ETB) for budget discussions.
- Avoid wordy, complicated, and awkward sentences. Be cautious of sentences that are more than twenty-five words long. Lengthy sentences often baffle the reader. Write short and easily understandable sentences, so the reader focuses on content.
- Follow correct language rules when it comes to the capitalization of proper names and places and the use of punctuation.
- Use the active voice.
- Avoid gender bias.
- Do not use contractions such as shouldn't, can't, and won't in proposals or theses.
- Personal pronouns such as I, you, and we may or may not be used depending on the university policy. However, if these pronouns are permitted, "I" is used for the author of the thesis. "We" is not appropriate, as it suggests the thesis has been co-authored. You are the thesis writer who is solely responsible for the document.
- Use "respectively" at the end of sentences only rarely and when appropriate. While easy for the writer, these sentences are almost always confusing.
- Colloquialisms, slang, clichés, and informal phrases used in spoken English do not belong in a thesis proposal or thesis. Examples include, "for example," "hang out," "screw up," "ASAP," "on the other hand," "stuff," "forenji," "get in touch with," "acid test," and "bitter end." Thesis proposals and theses are scholarly documents. Do not include informal language.
- Minimize technical jargon and define technical words or phrases so that a reader who is not familiar with the field of study can understand.
- Do not misspell words or allow grammatical errors in your thesis proposal or thesis. Use the spelling and grammar check in your word processor software to avoid English language spelling and grammar mistakes.

Carefully choose your thesis advisors. Graduates of your program can recommend the preferred and more helpful advisors. Thesis advisors are academic staff members, and they are all busy with teaching, advising, researching, program activities, writing for publication, and consulting. Identify those who will be available to you and offer you advice. You and your thesis advisors are a team in the thesis proposal and thesis effort, and this cooperation begins with the advisor selection. The journey is long from thesis topic conceptualization and approval to the final thesis

oral defense and thesis submission to the university. Usually, thesis advising is a paid responsibility of academic staff members in the university. Aside from research and statistical questions, ask for guidance in document style, formatting, and English language. Their role is that of mentor and teacher. Benefit from their wealth of education and experience.

Visit the academic dean or department head and examine exemplary and well-written thesis proposals and theses. Visit the library and investigate theses of graduates to observe the correct style and format. What does an excellent thesis proposal look like? Pursue this information. Do not guess. Learn from your predecessors.

## Research protocol with human subjects

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Please follow a proper research protocol when researching human subjects:

- Know the benefits and risks of subjects involved in the research.
- Deliver the exact information to the study subjects.
- Be aware of special incentives that subjects receive for participation in the study.
- Know the procedures for verifying informed consent of the study participants.
- Detail how you will secure and keep the collected data confidential.
- Be respectful, mindful, and ethical.
- Do not harm or offend your subjects.

Your university's Ethics Review Committee must formally approve, in writing, the proposed research study before the research begins. Keep the approval letter—the thesis oral defense evaluators may ask to see it. When you submit manuscripts of your research for publication, journal editors may request a copy of the letter. The Ethics Review Committee approval must be mentioned in the thesis and manuscripts submitted for publication.

## Part 2. Thesis proposal writing

The ultimate success of a thesis depends on a well-conceptualized and well-written proposal. You have carefully selected an original and relevant thesis topic, and the department or school selection committee has approved your topic in an oral defense session. Importantly, the advisors must support the research topic, general and specific objectives, research design, statistical testing procedures, and geographic location.

Do not continue with thesis proposal writing without unanimous approval from your advisors. Meet to confirm approval and take notes at this meeting for future reference. Do not waste time having to select a new topic or objectives, or alternate research design after you have begun writing.

Your thesis proposal topic and research design should be innovative and groundbreaking. Do not duplicate the research of other previously-written theses with the same or similar topics, general and specific objectives, populations, or research designs.

In the public health discipline, for example, similar thesis topics with slight geographic location variation are difficult to defend in Ethiopia because of the published, consistent, and predictable results, conclusions, and recommendations in some areas. These duplicative theses add little to the knowledge base in the discipline.

Upon completion, the thesis proposal must be approved and signed by the advisors and the institution. The proposal adheres to what has been formally approved at the onset of research. The sections of the thesis proposal are carefully crafted.

### Organization

Submit your thesis proposal with defined sections. Begin each of these sections on a new page. Write all section titles in uppercase letters.

### Cover page

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The cover page includes expected information—it is simple, informative, and unpretentious. It should include:

- Name of university
- College/faculty/school
- Department
- Thesis proposal title
- Full name of the student with the academic degree(s) previously earned
- Date submitted
- University location

The thesis should have a specific and concise title that accurately describes the topic, research, and the area or region of Ethiopia. Avoid superfluous phrases such as 'The Study of' or 'An Investigation on.' The title should capture the central theme of the proposed study. Scientific and medical words in the title are accepted where appropriate.

## Acknowledgments

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The acknowledgments page includes a few sentences that recognize the persons and institutions you are grateful to for guidance and support in the preparation of the thesis proposal. In secular national universities and colleges, do not acknowledge or thank religious deities. In religious universities supported by a church or mosque, you may acknowledge them.

## Abbreviations and acronyms

---

List the abbreviations and acronyms with explanations in alphabetical order on a single page. Do not list SI Units and internationally known abbreviations.

In the text, define each abbreviation and acronym other than Standard International Units in full when they are first used, followed by the abbreviations or acronyms in parentheses. Do not italicize abbreviations and symbols.

## Table of contents

---

Headings and entries in the table of contents correspond exactly in wording, font, and case with headings and entries as they appear in the text of the proposal. Subdivisions of headings should not exceed four levels. You may use the built-in style of MS Word or another word processor to create the table of contents.

## List of tables

---

A list of tables is a reference tool that allows readers to navigate to data in your thesis proposal or thesis easily. Construction of a list is like creating a table of contents. Format appropriately. Check that page numbers are correct. Note that a list of tables rarely occurs in a thesis proposal.

## List of figures

---

A list of figures is a reference tool that allows readers to navigate to information quickly and easily in your thesis proposal or thesis. Format appropriately and check page numbers. Note that a list of figures rarely occurs in a thesis proposal.

## Summary

---

In this section, include the background of the thesis topic, study objectives, and the planned research methods. The summary should be concise and less than one page in length. Present the summary in one single block-form paragraph using 1.5-line spacing without subtitles or divisions.



## Introduction

The introduction is the first chapter of a thesis proposal. It is brief and gives pertinent background information on the research project. It includes a clear statement of the nature and extent of the problem and the objectives that specify the research goals, information to be gathered, and questions or hypotheses to be tested. Subheadings may include background, statement of the problem, the significance of the study, and objectives of the study, which includes both the general objective and specific objectives.

This chapter is usually no more than five pages. Use the future tense.

## Literature review

The literature review is a critical analysis of relevant knowledge on the proposed research topic. This chapter will discuss the strengths, limitations, and, most importantly, the gaps identified in previous studies. Use citations that are from the past eight years.

Many national universities in Ethiopia now require that one-half of the references be published in the last eight years. Recent publications assure that you have conducted a current and comprehensive search on the topic and are not relying on, for example, older, similar theses or a published book shelved in the library as the primary reference document.

Avoid citations that are nine years and older except to provide a historical perspective. Avoid older citations in the areas of technology and medicine where advancements are constant and accelerated.

Do not reference unpublished documents or lay sources. Be critical in referencing popular Ethiopian magazines and newspapers as some are not scholarly sources of information. Do not reference your classroom notes. You may review them, but do not include them in your literature review, citations, or references.

Indications of a well-researched literature review include content from peer-reviewed publications. Pursue studies or articles in reputable journals, with recent dates of publication, and relevance to the thesis topic.

Because of problems with limited and current hardcopy books and journals in Ethiopia's university and college libraries, many if not most sources today are from online searches. Examples of sites include PLoS and the BMC journal series. Recent Ethiopian ministerial and government documents also contribute to the literature review. Recent national and international non-government agency reports, both Internet-based and hardcopy, on your thesis subject can be informative and useful. Regardless of the subject, you can find most anything on the Internet today.

Depending upon the thesis topic, focus first on the published research studies from Ethiopia, other sub-Saharan African nations, and lesser-developed nations.

Published research from advanced global regions or countries like Europe, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States should be reviewed for relevance. For example, the relevance of advanced medical technologies and experimental drug therapies conducted in a research center in London, U.K. is not relevant to the technologies and drug therapies available in a university hospital in Harar, Ethiopia. Computer learning technologies used in the Netherland's elementary schools are probably not relevant to those used in Bishoftu's public elementary schools.

African Journals Online (AJOL) is an excellent website. As of 2018, AJOL currently hosts 521 journals, including 245 open access journals. Also, HINARI, PLoS, ELDIS, and BMC are just a few of the dozens of Internet platforms you can use to find the latest research studies published in the last few years on most any topic.

Visit the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). Also, international global organizations present current research on their websites. The Ethiopian government and non-government reports, journals, and books can also be helpful for the literature review if recently published.

## Methods

The methods chapter describes what you plan and how you will conduct your research. Discuss what data will be recorded, the proposed tools or instruments employed in data collection, and the methods of analyzing the data.

In this chapter, outline specific, appropriate, and credible procedures to attain the proposed objectives of the study. State the planned research design. Research methods must be suitable to the problem area, i.e., the statement of the problem, the objectives, and hypotheses. When selecting your research methods, think of how you will conduct the proposed research.

Consider the affordability of the research. Do you have the money needed to conduct the research? You must consider the expense of equipment, the necessary office and laboratory supplies, travel costs, and labor outlays.

Address the methods of data collection, data quality control, and data analysis procedures. Be clear about what you plan to do.

The methods chapter should include:

- Definitions of terms (optional)
- Definitions of variables (optional)
- Description of the study area—region, zone, kebele
- Study period to collect data
- Study design
- Description of the population: the source population, the study population, the sample population, and inclusive and exclusive criteria

- Sampling methods: sample size formulae, calculations, and sampling methods

Data collection methods are many and depend upon the academic discipline. For social and health sciences, they could include questionnaires completed by the research subjects, formal observations, equipment checklists, focus group discussions, in-depth personal interviews, specimen collection, and laboratory analyses.

Describe the methods, techniques, and statistical tests planned for data analysis. Identify software names with version numbers (i.e., SPSS, SAS, STATA, ENDNOTE, and Epi Info).

Discuss how to check data collection instruments, plans for ensuring data confidentiality, and the validity of instruments used in the research. If an international organization's questionnaire, or an adaptation of it, will be used, then say this in the proposal and discuss available reliability and validity issues of the instrument from use in past studies.

## Plan of activities

The fourth chapter includes a brief narrative of the research plan and a timetable or chart. Focus on time management for the research project. Assign periods for the completion of various activities of the proposed research. Include only major research activities and your corresponding periods in the table. Use a Gantt chart to explain your schedule. Gantt charts illustrate the start and finish dates of the critical elements of the thesis research project.

## Budget

The budget chapter is a narrative discussion of the costs of the research. It describes the financial resources needed to conduct the research project. Aside from narrative discussion, list the personnel, per diem and data collection days, travel costs, equipment, expendable supplies, materials, and associated services for the project. Presenting the financial information in tables is helpful, but a narrative discussion is required. A budget section with only tables is grossly incomplete.

Occasionally, the university, college, government organizations, or non-government organizations will financially support research in small amounts of Ethiopian Birr. Partial funding is especially true if the research topic is of serious concern to the institution, organization, or government. You may wish to approach these sources by writing small grant proposals or letters that include the requested amount with a justification for funds requested. The actual costs of the budget items for the research must be accurate. Inflated costs in the budget diminish any funding considerations.

## References

This chapter includes works cited in the thesis proposal. If there is a citation in the text, there must be a reference for it. In Ethiopia, the American Psychological Association (APA) style and Vancouver style for in-text citations and references are more commonly used. However, Harvard and Chicago Manual of Style are two others that may be required for your thesis.

Organize your references per the citation style required by your department, college, or university. As a scholarly document, there is an expectation of exactness in the references with the author's name, publication, date, title, volume, and pages. Adhere to proper capitalization, commas, placement of dates, italicized numbers, and other details.

You will have many webpage citations. Be sure to include the author, title, date posted (if provided), retrieval date, and the exact website address. If thesis evaluators are unable to find the sites, they have the option to delay the oral thesis defense or decline signing the thesis until viewed.

Citation management software and websites are helpful. Described as a digital filing cabinet, it is your bibliographer creator. Multiple programs and websites come with digital annotating, keyword assignments, automatic article updates, and suggested papers. These programs bring consistency to the documents. The software and websites aid in keeping accurate sources for citations and references.

Websites like <http://guides.lib.uchicago.edu> provide comparison information such as working with or without internet connection, word processor compatibility, importing citations from web pages, and other matters.

Citation software allows the integration of information with MS Word and provides for an effortless style change. Reordering of citations that comes with editing and drafting a thesis proposal and thesis is also possible. Furthermore, citation software makes it possible to save and track references that they identify during your research. Zotero, Mendeley, and ENDNOTE are three very good sources. The first two are available for download for free while ENDNOTE requires a subscription or purchase.

Learn to use a citation manager as it will give ease and flexibility. Learning a preferred software and using it leads to more accuracy and reduced errors in the proposal and thesis citations and references. Some software packages also examine the document for grammar and plagiarism.

## Appendix

The appendix is the last chapter of the thesis proposal. It includes questionnaire drafts translated into English, Amharic, or a local language, participant consent forms, observation checklists, photographs, specifications of equipment planned for use, statistical formulae, a map of the study area, sample selection procedures, and dummy tables designed for use.

## Approval sheet

The approval sheet is the last page of the thesis proposal. Original signatures are required on the original thesis proposal and copies.

## Part 3. Thesis writing

A thesis is much more than a research paper. It provides the student the opportunity to develop a career skill: to develop and write logical and systematic arguments on an academic topic. Writing a thesis is one of the final steps in earning your degree; therefore, it must reflect a thorough understanding of a discipline, relevant theories, and have original research.

A thesis has the following aims and objectives:

- To formulate a research question and develop a research plan that includes a time management strategy
- To learn relevant and theoretical insights into real problems
- To generate new knowledge
- To report research and results clearly and systematically
- To assist you in your development as a scholar
- To broaden your understanding of a discipline that you can bring to your workplace

## Organization

The sections of the thesis include:

- Cover page
- Title page
- Approval page
- Dedication (optional)
- Statement of the author
- Biographical sketch
- Acknowledgments
- Abbreviations and acronyms
- Table of contents
- List of tables
- List of figures
- Abstract

The narrative chapters of the thesis include:

- Introduction
- Literature review
- Methods
- Results and discussion
- Summary, conclusions, and recommendations
- References
- Appendix

## Section Descriptions

There are several sections included in a thesis. Each of the sections adheres to an expected format and content.

### Cover page

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The cover page is the first page of the thesis. Unless allowed by the university, the cover page does not include the university logo, campus photographs, tables, figures, or borders. Your university may ask that you print it on hard white card paper. Center the text. Include:

- Name of the university/college/faculty/school/department
- Thesis title
- Academic program area
- Full name of the student with degree(s) already earned
- Month and year submitted to the university
- Location of the university in Ethiopia

### Title page

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The title page is the second page of the thesis and includes:

- Name of the university/college/faculty/school/department
- Thesis title
- A thesis submitted to [university/college/faculty/school/department] in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of [Arts/Science/Public Health]

- Full name of the student with degree(s) already earned
- Names of advisors
- Date of submission
- Location of the university

## Approval sheet

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The approval sheet is available from your college, faculty, institute, department, or school. These sheets can change annually so make sure yours is up-to-date. Include the final approval sheet in your thesis after the examiners sign it. Document signing occurs after a successful open-thesis oral defense and only after the required revisions that arise from the oral defense are incorporated and confirmed by a designated internal or external examiner.

## Dedication

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The dedication should be concise and ideally no more than one or two sentences long.

## Statement of the author

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On this page, the researcher declares that the thesis is entirely his or her work. Other's ideas and words have been properly cited. The researcher declares that the thesis or research has not been submitted to another institution for the award of a degree, diploma, or certificate.

## Biographical sketch

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The biographical sketch should be brief and include your birthplace, high school, college, and universities attended. You may include a brief description of your professional work experience. You may also include a curriculum vitae (C.V.) as the last appendix. The C.V. should be current and properly edited for both content and English language.

## Acknowledgments

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An acknowledgments page in a thesis is customary in Ethiopia. It is usually less than one-half page in length and recognizes the persons and institutions that helped the thesis writer. If a university, college, or government or non-government agency funded a part of the thesis research, mention it in this section.

In secular universities, do not acknowledge or thank religious deities such as Allah or Jesus. In religious universities, however, you may do so.

## Abbreviations and acronyms

---

You should list abbreviations and acronyms in alphabetical order.

Other than Standard International (SI) Units, define each acronym and abbreviation in full when it is first used in the text. Explain any terminology that may not be familiar to the reader in the narrative. Follow the definition with an acronym or abbreviation in parentheses.

## Table of contents

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All headings and entries in the table of contents must correspond exactly in wording, font, and case with the headings and entries as they appear in the thesis narrative. The headings and subheadings in the table of contents should not exceed four levels. Use the built-in style of your word processor to create the table of contents. If it exceeds one page, write table of contents with (Continued) at the top of the page.

## List of tables

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This is usually a single page. List tables in the thesis numerically. Titles should be exact.

## List of figures

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This is usually a single page. List figures in the thesis listed numerically. Titles should be exact.

## Abstract

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An abstract highlights major points and describes the content and scope of the thesis. It reviews material in an abbreviated form. It is ordinarily the first section read and sets the tone for the thesis. Most universities in Ethiopia require that the thesis defense candidate distribute his or her thesis abstract to attendees at the beginning of the open defense. This distribution occurs before the presentation and oral defense.

Abstract length varies by discipline and university and college requirements. The typical length is between 100 to 500 words. It is rarely longer than a single page with the appropriate 1.5-line spacing, margins, and font size. Universities and colleges in Ethiopia use a style that omits citation from thesis abstracts and reserves citations for the narrative that follows.

The best way to write an abstract is to start with a draft of the completed thesis and follow these steps:

- State your hypothesis or method.
- Identify the major objectives and conclusions.
- Identify phrases and keywords in the methods chapter.
- Identify major results from the discussion and results chapters.
- Assemble the above information into a single paragraph.
- Omit detailed descriptions of methods.



- Revise the paragraph so that the one-page abstract conveys only essential information.
- Study previous well-written abstracts as samples.
- Ask your thesis advisors to review the abstract word-for-word for clarity of ideas and English language.

## Narrative chapters

Divide the thesis into chapters that include:

- Chapter 1 – Introduction
- Chapter 2 – Literature review
- Chapter 3 – Methods
- Chapter 4 – Results and discussion
- Chapter 5 – Summary, conclusions, and recommendations
- Chapter 6 – References
- Chapter 7 – Appendix

## Introduction

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Prepare a draft of the introduction at the onset of thesis writing. Carefully refine the introduction after you have completed the thesis. This chapter is routinely about five pages in length. The first page of the Introduction begins with page 1.

An introduction includes:

- Sufficient background information so the reader can understand the context and significance of the problem addressed
- An acknowledgment of previous research work that you are building on
- A statement of the problem with the gaps in research finding
- Significance of the study
- Scope of the work
- Objectives of the study with limitations

Focus on your thesis questions. Cited work should relate to the goal of the thesis. Do not summarize everything you have ever read on your subject. Do not divide the Introduction chapter

into subchapters or divisions. Present the contents in a logical and well-organized manner to maintain a flow of ideas.

Occasionally, a thesis writer will write a lengthy Introduction chapter consisting of 10 or more pages. A long Introduction chapter is usually the result of the inappropriate mix of both introductory material and literature review data and statistics. Avoid this.

## Literature review

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The literature review is a critical analysis of existing knowledge on the research topic. It includes the strengths, limitations, gaps in previous studies, and justifies the need for the current research. This section must be relevant with recent citations. Sources from the past eight years are ideal and expected. Use citations that are nine years and older only when necessary for historical purposes.

### Additional consideration of sources

Not all published materials have the same research rigor, scholarship, or value. For this reason, you must evaluate your sources. Aside from the dates of publications, there are questions you can ask as you read and choose your references.

Who is the author? Learn the Ethiopian scholars who have published in your thesis area. Ethiopian universities have been developing scholars in all fields since the early years of Addis Ababa University (originally Haile Selassie I University) in 1950 and Haramaya University in 1954. With the vision and support of the Ethiopian government, the Ministry of Education has been creating universities throughout the country and students have been graduating from these universities with undergraduate and post-graduate degrees. Also, many Ethiopians have attended universities in European countries, Australia, Canada, and the United States and have returned to share their expertise on university campuses. Know Ethiopia's experts, study their work, and reference them.

Who is the publisher? Not all publishers are equally academic or scholarly. A book that has been self-published does not carry the credence of an imprint of, say, Yale University Press. For journals, there are impact factor statistics to consider. A British medical journal, for example, may have an impact factor of 3.70, while a Nepalese medical journal has an impact factor of 1.50. Learn more about this from your thesis advisors.

Is there a bibliography in the documents you cite and reference? How extensive is it? The bibliography should be current. You should be able to visit these sources.

Experienced thesis readers, thesis evaluators, and oral defense examiners often first read the thesis title, then the abstract, and then the references. While it may be the last pages of a thesis, the Reference chapters are the first on their minds. They examine the references to examine the authors, sources, types of published documents used, dates of the publications, and relevance to the thesis topic.

Citation transparency is required. All citations and references should be complete with the style used by the university.

## Methods

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The methods chapter presents the sources of data, methods, and collection and analysis procedures. The research has been completed, so use the past tense. Provide a concise description of the conditions of the investigation, materials, procedures, experimental designs and techniques. You may divide the chapter into subheadings depending on the nature of the study.

Include the study area and period, populations (source and study), sampling methods, data collection methods, study variables, quality control methods, data processing, analysis procedures, ethical considerations, and limitations. Restrict citations to data sources and references. Do not include a description of the results.

## Results and discussion

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Universities may require students to use “Analysis and interpretation” rather than “Results and discussion” in theses. You should check with your advisors so that chapter titles are written as required.

This part of the narrative interprets the results and analyses. Your university may allow you to present the results and discussion in separate chapters. Check with your co-advisors.

## Results

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Present your findings without interpretation. Give primary results in clear sentences at the beginning of paragraphs. It is better to say, “X had a significant positive relationship with Y” than to start with a less informative statement such as, “There was a significant relationship between X and Y.” Describe the nature of the findings and do not merely tell the reader whether they were significant or not. Avoid data repetition in tables and figures; however, when presenting data as in a figure, you may show the raw data in the appendix. Focus the narrative for each table and figure on relevant observations and findings. The results narrative should be an objective report.

If you wish, divide the chapter with subheadings. Present your results and answer the research questions described in the introduction with enough detail.

## Discussion

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Use the discussion chapter to describe the limitations and implications of the study. If you choose to write the results and discussion as one chapter, follow the descriptions of major findings with appropriate interpretations and discussion. When writing the discussion as a separate chapter, synthesize the discussion to flow with the results chapter.

The organization of the discussion chapter is important and the steps listed below will help you to sort your thoughts:

- Construct the discussion from the specific to the general, i.e., the findings, to literature, to theory, to practice.
- Use the same key terms, verb tense and perspective that you used when posing the questions in the introduction.
- Begin by restating the hypothesis and answer the questions posed in the introduction.
- Support your answers with results. Explain how your results relate to expectations and relevant published literature. State why they are acceptable and how they are consistent with previously published knowledge on the topic.
- Discuss the results relating to the questions, regardless of whether the findings are significant.
- Describe the patterns, principles, and relationships of each major finding and result and put them in perspective. The sequencing of information is important. First, state the answer, then state the relevant results, and then cite the work of others. If necessary, direct the reader to a figure or table.
- Defend your answers. If necessary, explain why your answer is satisfactory and why others may not be. Your argument is convincing only when both sides are available for scrutiny.
- Discuss and evaluate conflicting results and any unexpected findings.
- Identify potential limitations and weaknesses and comment on the importance of these to your interpretation of the results and how they may affect the validity of the findings.
- Provide two or more recommendations for further research based on the research findings. The recommendations should correlate with the research findings.
- Explain how the results and conclusions influence the knowledge or understanding of the problem examined.
- Results and discussions are conceptually different. In the discussion, you interpret the research results. A common mistake in the discussion is to present a sketchy interpretation that merely restates the results.

If the results differ from earlier published reports, explain why that may have happened. If the results agree with your expectations, then describe the reports and interpretations to support them. It is not adequate to just state whether the data agreed with earlier reports. Do not attempt to discuss every finding. Focus on the major findings that call for interpretation.

## Summary, conclusions, and recommendations

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This chapter provides a brief account of the objectives, methods, and major findings. This chapter draws conclusions and gives recommendations on such issues as organizational development, procedural concerns, educational matters, policy implications, and other relevant concerns. List unanswered questions that require research beyond the limits of the thesis.

This chapter does not usually exceed five pages. Avoid citations of previous studies and references to tables or figures in the narrative or the appendix. Where required, you may refer to numerical and probability levels. You may divide the chapter into three logical sections.

Avoid bulleting of information in this chapter. Bulleting is considered an informal rather than scholarly writing technique. Do not just bullet and number your conclusions and recommendations. A narrative format is expected with some limited bulleting.

Recommendations from the research findings are an important facet of this chapter. Write your recommendations thoughtfully. What recommendations from your research findings can you make to practitioners and academicians in your field of study from this thesis effort? How can your research findings contribute to the body of knowledge in the discipline in Ethiopia, Africa, and globally? Any recommendations stated must be derived from the research findings conducted in the thesis research. Theses usually have two or more recommendations to offer the reader.

## References

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The references chapter includes all publications and websites cited in the thesis. There should be a precise match between citations presented and the references. It is a common practice to check this match by thesis advisors, readers, and thesis examiners. Do not include personal communications cited in the thesis narrative in the References chapter. Present all references according to the style required by the discipline.

Plan to use the APA or Vancouver style. Ensure that you present the references in the correct format. The thesis readers and evaluators expect a proper and consistent use of journal titles, commas, semicolons, periods, and dates for each.

We have yet to read a thesis that does not incorrectly uses one or more foreigners' first names (ex. Mary, Thomas, Anne) for surnames. References including these first names are not correct. Seek the surname (family name) for the correct foreniji surname. Carefully present the surname with first and second name initials—i.e., Jones, T.R. Also, correctly state the proper titles of the national and international professional organizations, academic hard copy and on-line journals, and exact website addresses. You should state the access dates for website retrieval.

## Appendix

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The appendix is the final chapter of the thesis and may include a sample questionnaire in English, Amharic, or another local language, a consent form sample, an observation checklist, data sets, a conceptual framework, statistical formulae, or a map of the research area.

The term annex is rarely used in master's theses in Ethiopia. In thesis proposals and theses, number each appendix with a Roman numeral. Begin each Appendix on a new page. Appendices follow margin, font, and color rules.

## Part 4. Citations and references

A scholar credits other researchers and acknowledges their ideas and writings with citations and references. These strengthen your thesis discussion and arguments. Presenting ideas and quoting words by other authors allow your readers to pursue the sources. Cite sources accurately in your thesis. The use of citations and references voids an accusation of plagiarism.

It is important to check with your thesis advisors and academic dean to determine which citation and reference style is required for your thesis as there are multiple styles used across the academic disciplines in a university.

The standard styles used are American Psychological Association (APA), Vancouver, the Modern Language Association (MLA), Chicago/Turabian (CMS), American Medical Association (AMA), American Sociological Association (ASA), Oxford, and Harvard styles.

The most commonly used citation formats for theses, other academic papers, and national journals in Ethiopia are the APA, Vancouver, MLA, and CMS. The Vancouver style is applied in Ethiopia's public health and medicine publications.

There is no reason not to have letter-perfect citations and a flawless reference chapter. Exactness can be expected because there is a wealth of information on the Internet about each style that goes into detail on the citation formatting.

- APA – education, psychology, the sciences: <http://www.apastyle.org>
- Vancouver – [guides.lib.monash.edu/citing-referencing/vancouver](http://guides.lib.monash.edu/citing-referencing/vancouver)
- MLA – humanities: <http://www.mla.org>
- CMS – business, history, the fine arts: <http://www.chicagoguidebookofstyle.org>

The following websites are from reputable universities that offer discussions and examples of the various styles, guiding you in your citation use:

- Purdue University (USA): <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>
- Texas Tech University (USA): [http://english.ttu.edu/kairos/1.2/inbox/mla\\_archive.html](http://english.ttu.edu/kairos/1.2/inbox/mla_archive.html)

Social sciences, arts, and humanities disciplines may require APA style for in-text citation and references in the writing of theses. The other colleges or schools, like public health, medicine, and the hard sciences, may require the Vancouver style.

You will be using dozens of citations and references in the preparation of your thesis. Whenever possible, keep downloaded copies of published documents and journal articles gathered for citation and reference use. These copies become reference documents for your narrative and the citations and references.

## APA style

When using APA style format, follow the author-date method of in-text citations. This means that the author's last name (surname) and the year of publication for the source should appear in the text, for example, (Mengesha, 2017), and a complete reference should appear in the reference list at the end of the paper.

## Vancouver style

In applying the Vancouver style, citations are numbered in order with either round or square brackets, or superscript numbers. The numbers are consecutive in the order they appear in the text. Each citation corresponds to a numbered reference in the chapter. Once a source has been cited, the same number is used in all subsequent references. No distinction is made between print and electronic references when citing within the text.

The correct and consistent application of a citation and reference style in a thesis can be tedious and time-consuming. It is, however, necessary for a successful thesis. This area is often one of the most frequently mentioned criticisms in an oral thesis defense by the evaluation committee. This criticism can and should be avoided with careful action. Ideally, you will submit a thesis that is letter and period perfect. This is a sign of a disciplined writer.

Also, it is rare to read a thesis that does not include a few or even many foreigner's first names cited as surnames. For example, Mary, Ruth, Sean, and Roger are not surnames. Please check each of your citations and references for the proper use of names.



## Part 5. Ethics and thesis submission

When we hear the word ethics, we usually think of moral principles or virtues that govern our behavior. We each have a moral code or value system that we live by in our personal lives, with our families, our professional lives, and as students.

As a master's student, please view ethics as a serious topic for consideration. Ethics is a cornerstone of conducting research and writing about your research. Two major ethical issues involve data honesty and accuracy in citations and references.

### Data honesty

A questionnaire for a statistically-based thesis requires hours of work to complete. There are always concerns about the primary source, reliability, and translation. Give credit to the source of the questionnaire, even if tailored to your project. Have you conducted any reliability testing? Is the questionnaire carefully translated and tested? These questions frequently arise in oral thesis defenses.

As an ethical researcher, you should conduct interviews completely and by the procedures approved in your thesis proposal. Have you followed all the protocols?

If interviews are conducted, and forms are used for data collection, keep these documents even after the thesis is approved. In the instances where study subjects sign a consent form and a written questionnaire, be sure to keep these documents. We suggest you keep questionnaires, consent forms, and data collected for six months following approval of the thesis.

Record your interviews and focus group discussions. These are frequently the primary sources of data files for reference. Should a thesis advisor or an oral defense committee member wish to view or listen to these files, you will have the files available. These validate your work.

### Accuracy in citations and references

Aside from ethics, citations assure readers of the accuracy of facts presented by the thesis researcher. By providing a source, a reader can then judge fact reliability and check the published sources if they wish.

Citations give recognition to other researchers for your research. Depending on the topic, the readers may even know the Ethiopian scholars by reputation and scholarship. Accurately cite the works of prominent scholars in Ethiopia and give credit to their research. Often, the readers will examine the bibliography to look for those prominent scholars.

### Plagiarism avoidance

Plagiarism is unethical. It is intellectual theft and academic dishonesty. You may plagiarize intentionally or unintentionally, but regardless of intention, it is theft. Plagiarism occurs when a student submits the written work of another person as his or her work on a thesis proposal or a thesis.

The accusation and verification of plagiarism is a severe ethical matter in academe. For the thesis writer, it can lead to a complete do-over of a thesis on a different topic or even expulsion from the university.

Some types of plagiarism are easy to avoid:

- Do not cut and paste passages into your work from the Internet or published sources. Often, the style of the borrowed work varies significantly from the researcher's writing, making it easily identifiable.
- Be careful with paraphrasing. Do not retype a sentence or passage from a published source and replace a few words to make the passage just different enough to personally claim authorship. Always cite your sources. Detection websites can pick up as little as a phrase of several words or a sentence.
- Do not use the exact words of a source but fail to put the words in quotation marks or a block quotation.
- Your work should be original. Do not borrow a thesis and use the contents as your own.

To guard against inadvertent plagiarism, keep careful notes and records of sources. You may wish to print the page and highlight the words, phrases, or sentences you wish to use. Notetaking is a time-honored activity, but it is a slow and laborious process.

## Detection websites for plagiarism

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Plagiarism detection websites make it straightforward and easy to improve your ethical writing practices. These Internet-based tools study billions of online and uploaded hard copy publications. Unintended Internet plagiarism is common, and these detection websites help you to avoid the practice.

We encourage to use two or more of these websites to assist you with your citations and references. As of 2018, the five most highly regarded free plagiarism detection sites include, in the order of ease, are:

- BibMe
- Grammarly
- PaperRater
- Plagiarisma
- Plagiarism Checker

In document study, the free websites identify the complete source, including the verbatim words, the author(s), date of publication, and the website of the original writing. The passages identified can be as short as a phrase or even lengthy paragraphs.

Sites like BibMe and Grammarly offer both free and premium level memberships. The premium levels provide additional assistance with your writing and assist with automated proofreading and grammar and spelling error identification. They may suggest ways for improving the text. New free plagiarism detection sites are developed every year, and we encourage you to check for them.

## Thesis submission

There should be no borders, no mix of font types, no photos, tables or artwork on the cover or the title pages.

Follow the rules of capitalization, font size, margins, spacing, page numbering, bolding, indentation, and presentation of tables and figures. Have your thesis advisor and co-advisor proofread and edit your thesis for content, style, formatting, and English language usage. Provide your advisors both a soft copy and a hard copy of your thesis for ease in reading and references checking.

Have a native English language speaker review your thesis for language. Give this colleague at least a day or two to read and comment on the English language usage.

Use spelling and grammar check software to ensure there are no misspellings or grammar errors in the thesis.

Carefully identify the numbers and names of the chapters.

Check all in-text citations for completeness and formatting.

Present each reference in the references chapter in the proper format. Again, give special care to forenji surnames. Check the spelling of these names. It has become a practice for Ethiopian authors who publish to use their given first name and grandfather's name in publications without the use of initials. Please check with your university for appropriate use of Ethiopian names in the references chapter.

As the due date for submission approaches, give your thesis advisors a week or more to study your final document so that they can identify last-minute problems for you to make last-minute revisions. Your thesis is delivered by the university to the internal and external examiners in advance, and these academicians need time to study the thesis in preparation for the oral thesis defense.

Submit the thesis early or on time. Respect your advisors and your time. Please recognize that a thesis submitted after the formal due date, regardless of the many compelling reasons for the delay, may lead to delays in advisor approval. There may then be a delay in the oral thesis defense and even a delay in graduation.

Theses submitted after the date due tend to have flawed content, and major writing, style, and format errors. Thesis evaluators often issue marginal grades at the oral thesis defense and major thesis re-writes are common.

## Part 6. Oral thesis defense

If you are like students before you, your memories of your oral thesis defense will stay with you for decades. Make them happy memories through serious preparation before and on the day of your oral defense.

The oral thesis defense is the climax of your thesis writing and master's degree studies. It is a rite of passage, and your performance reflects on you, your thesis advisors, the program, and university.

The successful defenses were by students who were prepared. The thesis was ready for evaluation. The abstract was ready for distribution to all seated in the defense. The presentation was well organized and the slides readable. The computer was functioning. The student demonstrated a clear knowledge of the thesis content and did not read cluttered hard-to-read slides. The student had already observed thesis defenses and understood the ritual.

### Before the oral defense

Learn the defense ritual at your university. What are the procedures and expectations? The most effective way to learn the ritual is to attend oral thesis defenses of your colleagues. It is not premature to observe defenses by the students finishing before you. Learn from their successes and mistakes.

Confirm the day, time, and location of your defense in advance. Oral defense schedules are usually posted in the postgraduate offices and colleges a week or more before the event. Confirm with the program director.

Learn the time allocated to your defense. You should know exactly how much time you have for your presentation. Most oral defenses are twenty minutes followed by ten minutes of questions by the thesis evaluation committee members and those in attendance. Do not go under or over the time allotment. Practice your presentation so you adhere to the time constraint.

Prepare a well-written abstract for the committee and those in attendance. You may need as many as 25 copies. While the evaluation committee members have a copy of your thesis, the attendees will not. The abstract helps educate the audience on the content of your thesis.

In the days before the defense, prepare an effective and attractive presentation of approximately 15 slides for major presentation points. Limit your introductory slides. The slides should encapsulate the study and focus on methods, salient findings, and recommendations. In preparing the presentation, ask yourself, "What do I want colleagues to know about my thesis?" "What is the most important information I can present?" Navigate the committee and attendees through a logical, point-by-point sequence of information that builds to the conclusion in a clear and focused direction.

Too often, the presentations for oral defenses are poorly prepared. Avoid this problem by:

- Making slides readable to those the back of the room. Use large, dark-colored font.

- Making tables and charts readable.
- Using bullets with major words and phrases. Please avoid complete sentences. You are not reading your oral thesis defense.
- Including at least two recommendations.
- Anticipating questions. Questions will include, for example, statistical test choice, sampling methods, data interpretation, confidentiality issues, and English language problems.

## On the oral thesis defense day

The day of the oral thesis defense can be stressful. However, if you have prepared, you can present the defense with confidence. Anticipate a successful defense. Some suggestions for the day include:

- Come early to your defense.
- Be sure that your laptop, presentation file, and classroom or hall technologies are functional. Test the laptop and the presentation before the actual defense.
- Dress appropriately in a dress or suit and tie.
- Speak clearly.
- If necessary, use a microphone.
- Speak with authority.
- Promptly distribute the thesis abstracts to all in attendance.
- Do not rush in answering questions raised by evaluators and attendees.
- Have a hard copy of your thesis in your hands for any questions about content and language in the thesis.

## Thesis approval

After you have completed the presentation and answered questions, you will be asked to leave the room. The oral defense evaluation committee then meets for 30 minutes to evaluate both the thesis and oral defense. Depending upon the university, the grades range from outstanding, excellent, good, weak, to failing.

Rarely is a thesis approved in its entirety at the oral thesis defense. Rewriting and language corrections are always required. The oral thesis evaluation committee may require limited, moderate, or even major rewriting of the thesis for acceptance. The evaluators will share their annotated copy of the thesis with you for expected revisions. The required revisions are noted by

the committee and provided to you. The changes must be completed before thesis approval and signatures.

The thesis is signed only when the required rewriting has been completed and confirmed. An evaluator will confirm that the changes are made before submission. Please do not ask for signatures of approval to a thesis that has not been carefully studied and approved by the advisors and thesis examiners.

## Follow-through

Check with the university program academic office for the necessary number and type of bound copies required for submission to the university. Bindings must conform to university guidelines. One of the copies will be placed in the university library. You may wish to have two or more personal copies for future reference.

Make a contribution. Share your thesis results with those who would benefit and learn from your research results. You may share with groups within the university community, national organizations, and non-governmental organizations interested in the topic.

Make a concerted effort to publish your thesis results by writing a manuscript for inclusion in a national or international peer-reviewed journal. You may wish to collaborate in writing with your thesis advisors and include them as second and third authors.