

GSAM Guidelines for the FORMAT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

This document is designed to provide guidelines for graduate students in reporting their research findings and preparing their master's thesis in a format which is both standard within APU and internationally acceptable.

Note: *Research Reports follow the same format as Master's Theses.*

General instructions:

Master's Thesis Submission

- Students should prepare their theses, on subjects chosen by them and approved by the supervisor.
- The length of a thesis should be 25,000 words, excluding the bibliography and appendixes.
- For the purposes of the examination and defense, 3 hard copies of the thesis must be submitted to the Academic Office for distribution to examiners. A soft copy must be submitted through Turnitin for an originality check.
- Theses should be written in English and accompanied by a short summary in English. When it is to the advantage of the student and acceptable to the Dean, students may present their thesis in Japanese when, for example the background literature and documentation on which the thesis is based is mainly in Japanese. In such case, an English summary (2,000 to 2,500 words) must be provided.

Final submission

- One finalized soft copy of the Thesis must be submitted to the Academic Office for preservation at the APU Library, prior to the Graduation Ceremony.
- The following information should be included on the front page: the title of the thesis, the name of author, and month and year of graduation.
- The thesis should be printed on A4 sized paper, one-sided and double-spaced using a standard font. (Times Roman 12 point for the main text is recommended).
- Left and top margins should be approx. 3.5cm, while the bottom and right margins should be approx. 3.5cm.

Master's Theses

Introductory pages

- The final bound version of the thesis should have the following components (See appendices for further details on layout.)

Title Page
Acknowledgments
Table of Contents
List of Tables (where tables are used)
List of Figures (where figures are used)
List of Abbreviations and Symbols (if required)
Abstract
Preface (Optional)

Main body of the thesis

The structure of the main body of the thesis may vary depending on discipline, subject matter, and length. Three options which are regularly found are presented below

As a rough guide, the main body of master's thesis should generally be in the region of 25,000 words, in line with international practice. However, the quality of the work, rather than its length, should be the student's main concern. A short well-written thesis is better than a long, poorly written one. For a Japanese language thesis, the length shall be corresponding to the above.

OPTION I (Standard paper in scientific style, presenting data to test hypotheses etc.)

Introduction
Review of Literature
Theoretical framework and hypotheses
Materials, Methods of Data Collection, Methodology
Results
Discussion of Findings
Conclusions (including implications for further research)
References
Appendices

OPTION II (Humanities or qualitative social science paper, based on published literature and/or descriptive fieldwork, etc.)

Introduction
Review of Literature
Theoretical framework
Methods of fieldwork and data collection
Presentation of materials (organized into sections by topic)
Conclusions
References
Appendices

Appendices: Further notes on layout and presentation

Title page

- The words on the title page should all be centered
- The title and subtitle should describe the focus and contents of the study as accurately and concisely as possible, in about 10-12 words. The title should normally be in capital letters, centered and double-spaced.

The title should be followed by the following three lines:

Line 1: by

Line 2: [Student's Name]

Line 3: Month and Year of degree conferral (no comma between month and year)

- The student's name must appear as it is on the Student ID Card.
- The date on the Title Page should be the date of degree conferral, not the date the thesis is submitted.

The name of the student and date should be followed by the following lines, also centered

Line 1: Thesis Presented to the Higher Degree Committee

Line 2: of Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University

Line 3: in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Line 4: [name of degree]

Acknowledgments.

The acknowledgements section is written in the first person. Here, the author expresses appreciation to persons and organizations who have contributed significantly to the completion of the study and the thesis. The people and organizations normally acknowledged include:

1. the adviser for her/his guidance and other members to the guidance or advisory committee
2. sources of materials and information
3. people who lent equipment or gave other personal assistance
4. persons and organizations without whose technical, material, financial and inspirational assistance the research would have been impossible to accomplish or would have been longer and much more difficult.
5. scholars, publishers or organizations who gave permission for copyright material to be quoted or used.

The Table of Contents

- The Table of Contents is basically an outline of the thesis, indicating on what page each major section (or chapter) or sub-section begins. It should enable the reader to find the various chapters easily.
- Tables of contents usually include the following:
 - ✧ The label, Table of Contents, in bold type, at the top of the page
 - ✧ Wording, capitalization and punctuation of titles and headings should be typed exactly as they appear in text
 - ✧ Page numbers should be lined up flush with the margin at the right-hand side of the page – as a model, see the table of contents of almost any published book
 - ✧ All parts of the thesis, including the preliminaries (such as Lists of Tables, Figures, etc.) should be included in the table of contents
- Where tables, figures (diagrams, photographs, maps) are used in the thesis, a separate List of Tables or List of Figures should be included after the table of contents, laid out in the same way.
- Normally tables and figures are numbered in sequence by chapter, so Table 1.6 is the sixth table in chapter 1, and Figure 3.4 is the fourth illustration in chapter 3.

Footnotes

- Footnotes are textual notes that provide supplementary information, opinions, explanations or suggestions that are not part of the text. Footnoting differs between disciplines: historians often provide extensive footnotes including full bibliographical references, whereas social scientists use them more sparingly.
- MS word does footnotes well. The program should be set so that notes appear at the bottom of the page.
- Footnotes should be single-spaced in a 10-point size in the same font as the text.
- Footnote numbering can be continuous throughout the manuscript, provided the method used is consistent.
- A good general rule is to use footnotes only when you have to, as they tend to distract the reader. Simple references to books and articles should be included in the text in author/date format, e.g. “As Smith notes (1998: 375), there are many kinds of soba in Japan” or “Japanese noodles are discussed by many authors (e.g. Smith 1998: 375).”

Abstract

The abstract should state the problem, describe the methods and procedures used, and give the main results or conclusions of the research. It must be typed double-spaced. It must not exceed six hundred words in length.

Appendices

Appendices are materials, which are peripheral but relevant to the main text of the thesis. These may include survey instruments, additional data, details of procedure or analysis, or the text of important official documents etc.

References

- The List of References should include full bibliographical information on all sources cited in the thesis, arranged in alphabetical order and then year order by the family names or surnames of authors. Family names or surnames should be printed first, followed by a comma and then by initials or other names.
- Although there are several citation styles, APU recommends using APA style. For detailed thesis formatting and other styles of citation, please consult with your supervisor.
- Note that bibliographical software programs such as Endnotes allow references from a single database to be printed out in many different journal formats automatically. The key thing is to make sure that the information in your bibliographical database is complete and correct in the first place.

Pagination

It is normal to have separate page numbers for the preliminary pages. Preliminary pages include all sections that precede the text. They are arranged and numbered using Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, v etc.). The main body of the thesis then uses Arabic numerals (1,2,3,4, etc), starting at page 1. The title page usually has no roman numeral, though it is counted as part of the preliminary pages.

Page breaks

Chapters always begin on new pages.

There should not be breaks between sections or before tables or figures unless they occur naturally.

Headings

Headings in the text come at different levels (major sections, sub-sections etc). In some thesis styles, these are numbered, e.g.

3.1.4. Business behavior in Japan

This is a heading for sub-section 4 of section 1 of chapter 3.

The layout of headings differs between publishers, journals and thesis styles.

It is useful to adopt the same style for all section headings, and a different style for all subsection headings. (You may need a third style for sub-sub-sections!)

Level 1 headings can be bold type, capitalized, e.g.

The Japanese Firm

Level 2 headings can be italics, uncapitalized apart from the first letter and names, e.g.

The Japanese firm

Level 3 headings can be ordinary type, underlined, e.g.

The Japanese firm.

Tables

There is no generally accepted style for tables, so it is recommended that students adopt a model from a journal or publishing style, and use it consistently.

Tables could be placed in the text or on separate pages, depending on their size. Some tables may need to be printed on a separate page. There should be a double space between the table and the text. Tables should have titles, and should be numbered by chapter (Table 3.1, 3.2 etc), and the titles of the tables should be listed in the List of Tables at the front of the thesis.

Figures (Diagrams, photos, maps)

As with tables, figures can be either included in the text, or on separate pages. If they are included in the text, there should be a double space between the figure and the text.

Like tables, figures should have titles, and should be numbered by chapter (Figure 3.1, 3.2 etc), and the titles of the figures should be listed in the List of Figures at the front of the thesis.

MS Word, PowerPoint and Excel all have facilities for drawing graphs and diagrams.

Figures and diagrams should be clearly printed. Do not forget to check the spelling of titles of figures and tables, and words which are included in them.