

Writing a Thesis

A thesis is the document written by a master student to fully report an individual research project that they have undertaken as the final step in master degree. The student receives guidance from an appointed supervisor for their research project and thesis, however the thesis is examined and marked by a different staff member.

What is a thesis?

Key features of a thesis

- 40,000–80,000 words
- Represents the student's own original research: cannot contain any work or content that has previously been included in another degree or diploma
- Follows a logical sequence

Sections of a thesis

Preliminaries

- Title page
- Abstract
- Acknowledgements
- Table of Contents
- List of Figures and Tables

Main Body

- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Method/Methodology
- Results/Findings
- Discussion
- Conclusion

Reference Material

- References/Bibliography
- Appendices

Getting started with writing

1. Set a timeframe

Setting a time frame helps you manage your time effectively and gives you goals to work towards. Make sure you share your time frame with your supervisor.

2. Gather information on your topic

Start early with your literature retrieval, noting references as you go, and using programmes such as EndNote ([downloadable from MyEIT](#)) to collate your references.

3. Reading and notetaking

Make notes of your reading using a [notetaking](#) technique that will help you keep your readings and notes in order. Read with purpose, keeping your topic in mind to stay focused.

4. Plan your attack

Read through your notes to gain a big picture perspective. You may wish to use a [template](#) to help you organise your literature into common

themes and identify how the articles relate to each other. Organise sub-headings into logical order. Prepare draft outlines.

5. Write the chapters in order

Write the chapters as you go. Your introduction, literature review, and methodology can be written before you undertake the research and are based on your research proposal, although they are likely to need refining throughout the thesis writing process. After undertaking the research, write the findings, discussion, and conclusion chapters.

6. Prepare final copy

Edit to remove spelling or grammatical errors and improve clarity. Ensure [APA](#) (7th ed.) style is used. Be consistent with your spelling (use NZ English and Māori spelling accurately). Use a range of [proofreading strategies](#) to ensure your writing is accurate.

1. Use plain English, writing simply and directly
2. Make your writing succinct by editing out unnecessary words
3. Avoid unnecessary abstraction and jargon that has not been defined
4. Avoid too many long sentences
5. Vary the beginnings of sentences and the [reporting verbs](#) to maintain readers' interest
6. Use headings and sub-headings to improve readability
7. Ensure [transitions](#) between ideas and paragraphs flow and represent the relationship between ideas

Use these
style tips

8. Write in academic style using [academic phraseology](#)
9. [Paraphrase](#) rather than rely on too many quotes
10. Maintain formal, objective tone

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