

Make it to the end of your thesis
(without losing your mind!)

THE END
IS NIGH!

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*Will this thing ever be
finished and done with?*

Getting to the end of your thesis is a major challenge—intellectually, psychologically, even physically.

Will it *ever* happen? There's all that checking to be done all those references (why didn't I use Endnote?)... and all those grammatical errors and typos.

And is this work still cutting-edge? Has the field moved on since I started? Should I go back and update my lit review? Should I add a chapter to take account of recent developments?

What forms need to be filled in to submit the thesis? How many copies? What format? Who will examine it? How long will I be waiting for examination? What will my examiners be expecting? Will I pass? What does it mean to pass? What do I do when the examiners' reports arrive?

*Starting to
finish*

**⚠ THIS
TAKES AT
LEAST
THREE
MONTHS!**

YOU WILL NEED TO:

- Finish all chapters
 - Supervisor/chair approach to examiners ⚠
- Finish your introduction
- Collate your chapters
- Create a table of contents
- Create a table of figures
- Ensure all appendices and other addenda are included
- Insert page numbers/headers
- Check references: none missing? ⚠
- Check quotations and pages numbers for correctness ⚠
- Check all footnotes
- Copyedit thesis using a style guide (grammar, spelling, usage etc) ⚠
- Find a pre-submission reader for your thesis ⚠

NOMINATION OF EXAMINERS

- Three months before completion, your supervisor will start the process of appointing your Thesis Examining Panel.
- Panel members will be *nominated by your supervisor* in consultation with the Head of Enrolling Area.
- The PhD Thesis Examining Panel is convened by the Graduate Studies Committee and comprises the Chairperson of the Thesis Committee (ex officio) and two examiners both of whom shall be external to the University.
- *No person who has at any time been a member of a candidate's Interim Thesis Committee or Thesis Committee shall be eligible for appointment as an examiner.*

EXAMINATION PROCESS

- The examiners assess
 - your understanding of the field of study,
 - your ability to conceive, plan and conduct a program of research,
 - the originality of your work and the significance of the contribution you have made to that field
- A thesis should also be excellent in its standard of presentation, English expression, grammar etc., and contain a substantial amount of material that you (and sometimes your supervisor) have published or is suitable for publication in a refereed journal.
- The examiners are also required to assess the thesis in relation to your stated thesis objectives.

EXAMINATION PROCESS

Questions examiners ask themselves when examining a thesis:

- How would they tackle the problem set out in the abstract and title?
- What questions would they like answers to?
- Do conclusions follow on from the introduction and discussion?
- How well does the candidate explain what he/she is doing?
- Is the bibliography up-to-date and substantial enough?
- Are the results worthwhile?
- How much work has actually been done?
- What is the intellectual depth and rigour of the thesis?
- Is this actually 'research'—is there an argument?

EXAMINATION PROCESS

What makes a good thesis? Scholarship!

- Originality, coherence, and a sense of student independence.
- Development of a well-structured argument in stylish prose.
- Sufficient quantity as well as quality of work.
- Reflection: students make a critical assessment of their own work; recognise and deal with problems.
- Meticulousness—grammar, punctuation, and citation/bibliographic formatting are free of errors.

EXAMINATION PROCESS

What makes a poor thesis? Sloppiness!

- Work that is not original.
- Lack of a coherent argument across the thesis as a whole, and within sections of it.
- Sloppy grammar, punctuation, citation format, bibliography, and labelling of tables!
- Researching the wrong problem.
- Mixed or confused theoretical and methodological perspectives.

EXAMINATION PROCESS

Positive indicators

- ‘Sparkle, élan and sense of confidence with the material.’
- Cohesiveness and clarity.
- A student who makes the ideas his/her own, with some originality of presentation.
- Professionalism—demonstrated by mature comments, accuracy of the logic, and careful proofreading.
- Style (lucid sentencing) and sophistication (appropriate tone).
- Professionalism with regard to spelling, grammar, punctuation and citation/bibliographic formatting.

Negative indicators

- Poor references: usually a sign of a poor thesis—‘the two go hand in hand’.
- ‘Irritating things in the thesis, such as typos and other careless textual mistakes that indicate a lack of attention to detail—sloppiness in the text indicates sloppy research.’

EXAMINATION PROCESS

Assessment

- The examiners' reports are forwarded to the Chairperson of the Thesis Committee, who assesses the reports to determine whether they are in substantial agreement.
- This determination must take into account the content and context of the reports (i.e. qualitative assessment of the reports) as well as the overall classification (i.e. quantitative assessment of the reports).
- The Chairperson will either find that there is (1) substantial agreement among the examiners, or, in the event of (2) no clear weight of opinion, will recommend the appointment of an Adjudicator.

EXAMINATION PROCESS

Substantial agreement

- No Amendments A
- Minor amendments B1
- Substantive amendments B2
- Revise and resubmit C
- Fail D

No clear weight of opinion

- Adjudicator appointed

Oral examination

- To clarify aspects of the thesis you have submitted.
- Can only occur between initial examination and resubmission

FORMS AND FORMAL PROCESSES

- Title page check
- Declaration page
- Release of Thesis for Examination and Copyright Release
- Temporary binding
- Submission
- Final binding
- Digital submission of thesis to the library