

## STRUCTURE AND LAYOUT OF A THESIS

### Introduction

1. A thesis is a paper by the participant presenting his study in detail regarding a phenomenon/problem/application. While the ideas, findings, as well as conclusions arrived at in a thesis are of primary importance, the value and acceptance of the matter is largely influenced by an orderly presentation and the style adopted. This paper discusses the structure and layout to be adopted in documenting a thesis (in an orderly fashion).

2. **Outline.** For good readability and cogency, a thesis must be made into a well-rounded composition, unified and coherent, emphasising matters according to the scale of their importance. A well thought-out outline can make significant contribution towards a balanced, fluent and well proportioned thesis. Participants are advised to prepare such an outline and discuss it with their SDS Guides before proceeding with the preparation.

3. **Use of Notes.** A thesis should represent one's handling of a subject and not a mere report on what other writers have said. Naturally, a large part of one's material will be derived from other writers, but one should always see if a fact or idea finds a place in the pattern and, if not, it should be excluded. A writer who has studied his subject thoroughly always has more material than he can use.

4. **Abbreviations.** Accepted standards of the style of writing a thesis usually prohibit the use of abbreviations in the text. **Therefore, abbreviations familiar to the services as given in JSSD Manual Volume-II should not be used.** Shortened titles such as Prof, Gen, Capt and the like are considered poor form. However, abbreviations are acceptable in the case of Mr, Messrs, Mrs and their foreign equivalents; e.g. 16 mm, 250 cc, and 5 ft 11 in etc.

5. **Language.** Since a thesis is a viewpoint of an investigation according to scientific principles and is not of a personal or conversational nature, it should be written in the third person.

### Structure

6. The structure of a scientific paper is made of three parts, namely preliminaries, main body and reference matter, properly presented in the standard size paper with proper margin, spacing and pagination. This gives the thesis a good physical appearance.

### Preliminaries

7. The preliminaries include the informative material which serves as a guide to the text of the paper. The information should include the foreword, preface, acknowledgements and list of contents, including a list of abbreviations.

### Main Body

8. **Introduction.** The main body of a thesis is a systematic exposition of the work done by the participant. The main body begins on a new page, with '**Introduction**' as the opening section. In the introduction, the background leading to the aim of a thesis is explained. The importance of the problem justifying need of the study should be preferably covered in the introduction. This is followed by **Hypothesis, Aim, Scope of Study** and the organisation of the rest of the thesis.

9. **Coverage.** The process of data - analysis - findings should then be covered in a coherent and logical manner. Theoretical concepts and knowledge of management subjects 'per se' should be taken for granted as known and understood by all readers and therefore no efforts should be spent in summarising and explaining the same in a thesis. Nor should the thesis be used mainly to convey the painstakingly collected information and data. Such unnecessary coverage should be avoided. The coverage should be limited to presenting data, analysis and findings as related to the aim of the thesis.

10. **Conclusion.** The conclusion serves the important function of tying together the whole thesis in summary form. The developments of the previous sections should be succinctly restated, important findings emphasised and conclusions drawn from the whole study. These conclusions must have relevance to the stipulated aim. Recommendations, if any, may also be stated here. Such recommendations must be seen as arising out of the study. Recommendations should be followed by areas of further study, which are necessary to find answers to the questions raised.

11. The text of the main body could be arranged in chapters and sections. Footnotes will be given, where required, to authenticate opinions/ findings/ data attributed to other sources.

12. **Footnotes.** Footnotes are the references which give additional information to clarify some point in the text and to indicate the source of information. The information given in the footnotes may distract, if run on in the text proper, and hence is given at the bottom of a page. Footnote should be written in Author – Title format and in authors name too it is surname followed by the first name. There is no requirement of writing Rank / title of the author. Also, quoting 'Wikipedia' is to be avoided.

### **Reference Matter**

13. The reference matter is provided to help a reader get accessory information about the matter discussed in the text, by either giving more information about the books/articles consulted, or giving the meaning for words used which are technical and are not commonly used, or aiding locate a particular topic through the subject index, the author index, or title index. The reference matter consists of the bibliography, glossary and appendices.

14. **Bibliography.** Bibliography is a list of documents, books, periodicals, manuscripts, etc - which have some useful information on the given subject. **A bibliography should include only those works which the participant has consulted for the study. This should be written in alphabetical order.** Bibliography to be written sequentially as Books, Journals/ Magazines, Articles and Internet.

15. **Glossary.** The glossary offers explanations of technical terms used. The terms are arranged in an alphabetical order. This saves the reader from the trouble of looking into the dictionary for the meaning of those words.

16. **Thesis Abstract.** A 150 -250 word thesis abstract is to be submitted to the University Division alongwith the thesis.

17. **A Guide to Abstract.** A guide to good abstract writing for journal articles is given in succeeding paras

18. Writing an article for journal publication can be a daunting task for young inexperienced authors. Although all sections of a manuscript are important and should be well written, the abstract is usually the first section to be read and its content can either attract or repel a reader. Despite the emphasis given to good manuscript preparation and guidelines provided, many authors still find it hard to produce manuscripts that are compelling or abstracts that are enticing to readers. This will be an interesting resource for both experienced and amateur authors aspiring to write journal articles for publication.

19. An understanding of the meaning and purpose of an article abstract is important to good abstract writing. An abstract has been defined as **"a brief summary of a research article that emphasizes what is new, captures the salient features of the purpose, design, findings, and implications, and contains no unnecessary sentences or explanations."** The purpose of the article abstract is to make it easy for readers to quickly grasp the key points of the article. This will help them determine their interest in the article and/ or its relevance to their work. As a brief summary, the abstract is expected to be an exact reflection of the content of the main text. It should not contain any information that is not presented in the main text, neither is it expected to exclude vital findings or shortcomings of the research. The emphasis should be on the novel features of the article, and it should be presented logically along the lines of the sections of the article's main text. This includes context and background, objectives, the setting of the research, work done or materials and methods, findings/results, and conclusions from the results.

20. As a rule, abstracts do not include citations, figures or tables; however the format of an abstract may vary from discipline to discipline and from journal to journal. Some features of a journal article's abstract distinguish it from conference abstracts designed for oral or poster presentation. These features, among others, include that journal abstracts could be indexed in academic databases while conference abstracts are not so indexed, some journals do not allow conference abstract citation in their articles, and often conference abstracts are not recognized as publications in the same manner articles are treated.

21. In a nutshell, the following are some guidelines for writing a good journal abstract :-

- (a) It is a brief summary of completed or ongoing research article.
- (b) It includes information on the context or background of the study.
- (c) It states the rationale for the study.
- (d) It has clear objectives/project statement.
- (e) It has a succinct presentation of the work done.
- (f) It contains clear and logical presentation of findings.
- (g) Its conclusions are supported by the results.
- (h) It includes a take-home message or statement of impact.
- (j) It has been written according to journal guidelines, structured or unstructured, word limit, etc.
- (k) It has good grammatical writing.

**Layout**

22. The layout of the thesis should conform to the following:-

(a) **Preliminaries**

- (i) Cover Page.
- (ii) Self Declaration Certificate and Certificate by SDS.
- (iii) Table of Contents.
- (iv) Acknowledgement.
- (v) List of Appendices, Tables and Illustrations.
- (vi) Glossary.
- (vii) List of Abbreviations.

(b) **Main Body**

(i) **Introduction**

- (aa) Background to the study with a brief justification.
- (ab) Statement of the problem.
- (ac) Aim & objectives.
- (ad) Hypothesis.
- (ae) Scope of the Study.
- (af) Organisation of Thesis / Chapterisation.

(ii) **Main Body.** Data and analysis arranged in chapters & sections.

(iii) **Conclusion**

- (aa) Conclusion.
- (ab) Findings.
- (ac) Areas of further study, as applicable.

(c) **Matter Reference** (As applicable)

- (i) Appendices (Relevant chapter No. and Page No. to be mentioned at top right hand corner of each appendix).
- (ii) Bibliography.

23. **Page Numbering.** All pages, except the title page and the following blank page, are to be numbered serially as follows: -

(a) **Preliminaries.** All pages are marked with small Roman numbers commencing with the Table of Content marked as (i).

(b) **Main Body.** All pages, beginning with 'Introduction' are consecutively marked using Arabic numerals.

(c) **Reference Matter.** The numbering of pages pertaining to Reference Matter is in continuation with that of Main Body but on a separate file in the CD.