



**The University of Hong Kong**  
A publication of the Graduate School

# **Preparing and Submitting Your Thesis**

## **A Guide for MPhil and PhD Students**

July 2018

## Foreword

By issuing the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of this booklet, the Graduate School demonstrates its intention to retain the good from the past while discarding the not so good. You are advised to take a careful look at the booklet because we believe that you will all find something useful in it, before you embark on probably the most important undertaking of your academic career.

Graduate School  
July 2018

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## Introduction

This guide, prepared by the Graduate School, is intended to assist research students in preparing their theses for submission for the degrees of MPhil and PhD.

The University documents listing all the regulations and procedures relevant to thesis submission are now gathered together in the appendices of the latest edition of the *Handbook for MPhil & PhD Programmes*, which is available on the website of the Graduate School. These regulations and procedures are also listed in *Appendix 1* of this guide and cross referenced to the appendices of the *Handbook*. Where appropriate, extracts from the relevant University regulations and procedures are shown in the text of this guide in italics.

The guide also makes recommendations for the format and style of presentation of theses, which go beyond the University's formal stipulations. *Appendix 2* to the guide contains a series of sample pages which show how a clean and consistent style can produce a thesis of which you and your University can be proud. These suggestions may not be to every author's taste but it is hoped that they may provide some ideas on what makes a well presented thesis and what does not. Students should note that the text on these sample pages, and elsewhere in this guide where typical extracts from a thesis or recommended forms of words are given, is printed in a different typeface from the rest of the text in this guide (such text where it is particularly lengthy is in the form that printers call a dummy or Greek text—a meaningless collection of nonsense words that actually resembles Latin—which has an average word length similar to that found in typical passages of written English and which is intended to prevent the reader from being diverted into reading words that are used only to illustrate the placement and formatting of a text).

*Appendix 3* to the guide is a set of abstract preparatory guidance compiled by Professor B.W. Darvell and endorsed by the former Board of Examination for Graduate Studies, providing very useful tips on how to write a good abstract which is an extremely important section of any thesis.

This edition of the guide has benefited from feedback from students and staff alike, and the Graduate School welcomes any new comments on this guide, including those which point out errors of omission or commission, and particularly suggestions for ways in which it can be improved further. Future editions will provide even more precise advice as the University refines and develops its guidelines for all aspects of the work of its research students.

## Preparations

Undoubtedly you should have thought about much of what follows should best be known some months ago, but it is never too late to start!

- **Follow the rules and regulations—they are there to be complied with.**

If you do not follow them you may encounter difficulty in getting your hard work accepted by the University for the degree that you want. This guide reproduces some of them and explains some of the more important University provisions but it is your responsibility to know them all. They are in the latest edition of the *Handbook for MPhil & PhD Programmes*; make sure that you have a copy—and read them!

- **Do you have the necessary skills?**

***Theses are about writing.*** Practise writing from week one of your studies so that the effort needed to produce your thesis does not come as a great shock! Make sure that your supervisor sees, and is given time to comment upon, any essays or draft thesis material that you produce (read the section dealing with the University's Good Practices for Research Postgraduate Students in the latest edition of the *Handbook for MPhil & PhD Programmes* if you have not already done so). Do give him or her reasonable notice of the arrival of the material that you expect to be read and commented upon: supervisors do have other demands on their time too. Keep all the materials that you draft in a format, e.g. a WORD file with a brief description of the file and the date, on the computer, an external drive, a memory stick, or the Cloud, which will enable it to be smoothly incorporated in drafts of your thesis; this can save you a great deal of time. You will often be surprised at how much of your preparatory work can be recycled into a thesis draft.

***Do you have trouble with expression in English?*** If so, do something about it sooner rather than later. The Graduate School has arranged a Graduate Student Writing Support Service and courses/workshops on academic writing with the Centre for Applied English Studies; they are described in the Graduate School website. Your supervisor will of course try to help you express yourself accurately and with style as your thesis develops through its various drafts, but you cannot expect him or her, or anyone else, to act as a proof reader and grammar checker on the final copy of your thesis given to them a few weeks before the due date of submission.

***Know your computer*** (and printer, and word processing, desktop publishing, drawing, graphics, spreadsheet and database programs). Do not leave learning the skills necessary to operate them until the last moment; take advantage of the courses offered by the Information Technology Services (ITS). Make sure that any software and hardware that you use is compatible before you rely on others to produce the final version of your thesis.

- **It will take longer to produce your thesis than you think.** Build into your personal time scheduling a generous period devoted to compiling your thesis. This is especially true if you intend to include a lot of illustrations which have to be produced (in at least quadruplicate) and also pasted onto the appropriate pages. If you are going to use graphs, bar charts, pie charts etc., make sure that you have mastered a graphics program which will do what you want. Some modern word processing programs form part of a suite of programs, e.g. *Microsoft Office*, which also include a spreadsheet, graphics and drawing programs that can easily exchange information amongst themselves. Some are available at very competitive prices from the ITS. Desktop publishing (DTP) software will usually import other file formats without too much difficulty. Also, do give your supervisor(s) a reasonable amount of time to read and comment on thesis material: include in your estimate of (i) how long it will take you to produce your thesis, (ii) the time that he or she will need to make comments and (iii) the time that you will need to follow them up.
- **Organise your reference and source material.** When you start collecting reference material try to ensure that it is in a form from which you can import it easily and accurately into your thesis. The use of a database is recommended: there are general databases, such as *Access*, *dBASE*, *Foxpro* and *Paradox* as well as specific bibliographic databases such as *Endnote*, *Refworks* or *Mendeley*.
- **Don't give up hope!** Most members of the academic staff of this University have produced one or more theses for a research degree. It is a major undertaking; if you prepare for it properly then you will have the satisfaction of having produced a good thesis in a reasonable time, as well as the research degree itself.

Good luck.

## The Thesis Title

The University requires that:

*To allow sufficient time for the appointment of examiners for a thesis and an oral examination, a candidate shall serve written notice of intention to submit a thesis for examination at least 3 months prior to the expected date of submission. The notice shall be accompanied by a provisional thesis title.*

*Regulations for the Degree of MPhil MPH12 and PhD PHD12,  
Notice of Intention to Submit Thesis.*

*1. A candidate shall serve written notice to the Chairman of the DRPC\* of his/her intention to submit the thesis for examination, at least three months before the expected date of submission. The candidate shall send, at the same time, a copy of such notice to his/her supervisor(s). Applications for a waiver of the 3-month notification period shall be approved by the Faculty.*

*2. Upon receipt of such notification, and in any case before the thesis is submitted, the DRPC\* shall recommend the appointment of examiners for the thesis and the oral examination.*

*Procedures for the Degree of MPhil MPH13 and PhD PHD13,  
Notice of Intention to Submit Thesis.*

*\*DRPC refers to Departmental Research Postgraduate Committee*

The formulation of your thesis title is an important undertaking. It should be as short as is compatible with an accurate description of the content of your thesis. If it is too long there may be difficulty in accommodating it on the spine of the thesis when it is finally bound! Until your thesis title is known it may not be possible to identify and appoint suitably qualified examiners.

Note that the wording of the thesis title need not be, indeed is rarely, the same as that describing your field of study when you registered. This latter indicates only which general area you intend to work in. You should, as required, discuss the proposed title with your supervisor(s) and ensure that it is constructed accurately and grammatically since it will appear in a number of important, public, University documents.

When a provisional thesis title is ready it can be submitted to the Faculty Secretary at any time following the confirmation of your candidature but it must be submitted *at least three months* before you intend to submit the thesis for examination. The principal reason for this provision is to enable the Faculty to have sufficient time to appoint the specialist examiners for the thesis. It is a good idea for you to encourage your supervisor(s) and head of department to submit the names of the recommended examiners at the same time as the proposed thesis title in order to minimise delays in the examining process.

If you wish to change your thesis title, you should discuss the change with your supervisor(s) and then inform the Faculty Higher Degrees Committee and the Faculty Board so that they can decide whether any changes in the nominated specialist examiners are necessary.

You may find it useful to record below certain key details of your candidature, including the dates of submission.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Date</b>
Date of first registration	/ /
Study period ends	/ /
Candidature confirmed	/ /
Notice of Intention to submit thesis	/ /
Earliest date for submission	/ /
Actual date of submission	/ /
Date of oral examination	/ /
Other useful information	

## The Thesis Format

The University stipulates that:

*The thesis submitted for examination shall be typewritten or printed on one side or both sides of International size A4 paper (except for drawings, maps or tables on which no restriction is placed), with a margin of not less than 35mm on both right and left-hand edges of each page.*

*Regulations Governing the Format, Binding and Presentation  
of Theses for Higher Degrees by Research*

International A4 paper is 210 mm wide x 297 mm high. The required left and right margins are 35 mm which is intended to give sufficient blank paper for the binder to bind your thesis and to ensure that when the thesis is open all the text can easily be read. There is no stipulation for the top and bottom margins, but it is recommended that they should be 25 mm. If they are much wider than this then you may waste a great deal of paper, if they are much narrower than this then the text may come to lie too close to the edge when the binder slightly trims the edges of the thesis.

The paper should not be too thin or too thick and should be white with a plain surface texture, i.e. it should not be what is described as laid paper, suitable for the printer that you will use. The paper commonly used for letters and photocopying is a bond paper with a weight of about 80-90 gm<sup>2</sup>, that is one square metre of paper weighs 80 to 90 grams. If photographs or other illustrations are to be mounted on pages of the thesis then these pages may need to be slightly thicker, i.e., heavier, than the normal text pages.

Whatever brand of paper you choose, you should take care to ensure that it is easily available or that you have obtained a sufficient number of sheets to produce all the necessary copies of the thesis; varying shades of white paper will detract greatly from the appearance of your thesis. You may wish to record the details of the paper that you finally choose.

### Paper Details

<b>Text pages</b>	<b>Specification</b>
Size	A4
Type or brand name	
Weight	
Supplier	
<b>Other pages (optional)</b>	
Size	A4
Type or brand name	
Weight	
Supplier	

## Style

Modern theses should be produced in a particular style with the aid of a word processor. This is particularly important since you will need to produce copies of the original typescript, known as the top copy, to meet the University's requirement of sufficient copies of the thesis for submission. Students are also required to submit one soft copy of the thesis for open access in the HKU Scholars Hub. Please see the section on "Requirements for Submission of Electronic Theses to the Libraries".

There are many books which contain detailed guidance on the styles to be adopted in theses for formatting text, headings, references etc. The longest established is probably that developed from the *Chicago Manual of Style*, first published by Kate Turabian in 1937. It describes the conventions employed by the University of Chicago Press when she was editor of official publications and dissertation secretary at that University. The latest edition of this *Manual for Writers*<sup>1</sup> is available in the Main Library (call number 378.242.T929). Additional resources on theses and dissertations writing can be found in the Libraries' website.

Turabian's manual is very detailed, and hardly bed-time reading, but there is a useful option for those who are sufficiently familiar with at least one or two word-processing programs, *Microsoft Word* and *WordPerfect* since they contain a document template which has all the instructions necessary with which to write in the "Turabian" style or to format already written texts. Desktop publishing programs like *Microsoft Publisher* may have this facility too. However, it is not recommended that you embark upon using these templates unless you are thoroughly familiar with the programs themselves. Sophisticated word processing programs can, if they are installed with the appropriate text converters, import files written in other program formats, e.g. *Word*, *WordPerfect*, *Excel*, *dBase*, or in the simple DOS/ASCII text format.

Laser printers produce text comparable to printed books, especially those that print at 600 dots per inch. Since a thesis is the greatest (longest?) work that most people will produce in their lives, it deserves the best form of printing available. If you use an ink jet printer make sure that it is capable of near-letter quality (NLQ) text rather than just draft quality text which does not photocopy well.

However, even with access to all the power and variety that the combination of modern software and hardware offers, resist the temptation to use fancy or decorative fonts in the main part of the thesis. Look at any textbook, or a newspaper, and note that their body text is almost invariably printed in a serif font (a serif is a small cross stroke at the tops and bottoms of the main strokes of the letters) such as Roman, or Times or Times New Roman: publishers know how to sell their products and how to make life easy for readers and, by extension, examiners! Sans serif (*sans* = *without*) fonts lack embellishments and are usually used only in titles, headings or other blocks of text, such as quotations, which need to be set apart from the main text.

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<sup>1</sup> Turabian, Kate L. 2013. *A manual for writers of research papers, theses, and dissertations: Chicago Style for students and researchers*. 8th ed. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press.

Font heights are usually measured in points (there are 72 points per inch) and the most easily readable fonts are 10 point and 12 point. The panel on page 11 shows typical fonts in 10 point full size.

It is a matter of personal taste whether the main text of your thesis is left justified (sometimes called ragged right—in which all lines start at the left text margin and the spacing between words is equal, so that the lines of text are of unequal length), or fully justified (sometimes called right justified—in which spaces are automatically inserted between words, so that every line of text in a paragraph, except the last, always occupies the full width of the space between the left and right text margins). Examples of each of these styles are shown in the panel on page 11.

Having chosen the appropriate font and its size, the next decision you must make is the line spacing to be used. Theses were traditionally double spaced when they had to be typewritten and space had to be made available for superscripts and subscripts. Modern word processing programs will automatically adjust the line spacing to match the size of text on any line. Single spacing will produce a dense but readable text: the text may seem less formidable if one and a half line (1½) spacing is used. Double spacing results in a rather empty looking page and significantly increases the number of pages in a thesis. Text spaced in each way is shown in the panel on page 11.

The chapter and section headings in the thesis should use font, size, indentation and style to indicate their relative importance. Again, resist the temptation to use too many decorative fonts, just one or two fonts can be used to adequate effect. The possible combinations are endless—two suggestions are illustrated in the panel on page 12. The title at the head of each of the major sections can be formatted in an attractive, eye-catching style (as in this booklet - that at least is the intention!) However, do not overdo such decoration otherwise it distracts attention from the content of the thesis and may irritate the reader.

Many word processing programs offer an outlining facility in which the different levels of heading are numbered and indented sequentially thus:

- Chapter or Section Title – Heading level 1
  - 5.1 Heading level 2
    - 5.1.1. Heading level 3
      - 5.1.1.1. Heading level 4
      - 5.1.1.2. Heading level 4
    - 5.1.2. Heading level 3
      - 5.1.2.1. Heading level 4
  - 5.2. Heading level 2
    - 5.2.1. Heading level 3
      - 5.2.1.1. Heading level 4
      - 5.2.1.2. Heading level 4
- Chapter or Section Title – Heading level 1
  - 6.1. Heading level 2
  - etc.

Whether this style is used to number, and perhaps format, headings and tables of contents is a matter of personal preference: some readers definitely find it very distracting, confusing or irritating. Whilst it may be a good way of structuring information, the human eye tends to look for different patterns of fonts and styles rather than a logical series of numbers. With ink jet and laser printers, it is unnecessary to use underlining (except in rare cases where special emphasis is needed)—bold and italic styles will always be more attractive and effective.

Your text pages should of course be numbered. Word processing programs will automatically insert page numbers within the page margins that you set in a special section of the page layout known as a footer. Books commonly use headers to repeat the book and/or chapter titles at the top of each page. Such headers are probably unnecessary in a thesis.

Any thesis which is full of typographic, spelling and grammatical errors should not be expected to deserve the award of a higher degree. This is a strong statement, but these are the most common matters about which adverse comment is made in the reports by both internal and external examiners: in extreme cases the examiners may demand that the thesis be resubmitted for a new examination. The problem is not unique to HKU or to Hong Kong but there are remedies to hand.

Firstly, ensure that you have enough time to read what you have written. It is difficult to check something immediately after you have written it: you need to allow a little time to elapse before you can come back to it with a fresh, critical eye. There will be great, self-imposed pressure to ignore this obvious advice if you have significantly underestimated the time remaining before you need to submit your thesis.

Secondly, remember that it is *your* thesis and that its presentation, as well as its content, reflects upon you personally and on the University. Your supervisor will read drafts of your thesis (and is expected by the University to read it before submission) and provide help with matters of expression and accuracy, but you cannot expect him or her to be such a thorough proof reader as you should be: it is *your* thesis.

Thirdly, do not expect to be able to master all the intricacies of the English grammar, if that is the language of your thesis, in the time you estimate that you will need to write and compile your thesis. If your ability in this regard is inadequate, and you will know if this is the case if you are honest with yourself, you should have tried to do something about the problem much earlier. Note the Graduate Student Writing Support Service and the academic writing courses that the Graduate School and the Centre for Applied English Studies have arranged for your benefit.

Fourthly, be cautious in the use of thesaurus programs, even if you think that your English is good. Not all the synonyms offered may be equally appropriate. If you are in doubt about the proper use of a word, either seek advice or use another, probably simpler, word whose use you are more familiar with. It is better to be guided by accuracy and simplicity than attempting to produce an extravagant or pretentious style.

Fifthly, there is the problem of grammar checking programs, since some people find them difficult to use and understand. However, they will usually pick up

problems such as incorrect tenses, lack of agreement between noun and verb etc. If you do decide to use one ensure that you are completely familiar with its operation and then run it on the final version of your text just before printing; note that it may take a long time to check the whole text of a thesis.

Moreover, *please* use a spelling check program on the absolutely final version of the text before you print it. Many of these programs use the spelling conventions of American English rather than British English, but the most modern word processing programs offer you the choice; most reasonable people will be prepared to accept either, provided that your usage is consistent.

Finally, with the implementation of the Guidelines on the use of inclusive language in academic work (document 379/318) from the academic year 2018–19 onwards, no matter which language you use for your academic work, you are encouraged to use inclusive or gender-neutral language in your thesis and any other academic work. Information of inclusive language can be found in resources such as

- *Nine techniques for achieving gender neutrality*  
([https://edwardseducationblog.files.wordpress.com/2013/08/the-chicago-manual-of-style-online-5-225\\_-nine-techniques-for-achieving-gender-neutrality.pdf](https://edwardseducationblog.files.wordpress.com/2013/08/the-chicago-manual-of-style-online-5-225_-nine-techniques-for-achieving-gender-neutrality.pdf))
- *Stereotypes and biased language*  
(<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/608/05/>)

## **Fonts (10 point fonts actual size)**

### **Courier or Courier New 10 point (an electric typewriter font)**

Dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat.

### **Roman or Times Roman 10 point (a serif font)**

Dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat.

### **Helvetica 10 point (a typical sans serif font)**

Dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat.

## **Alignment**

### **Left Justified (Ragged Right)**

Dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. Dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt.

### **Fully Justified (Right Justified)**

Dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. Dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt.

## **Line Spacing**

### **Single (Auto) spacing**

Dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat.

### **One and a half spacing**

Dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat.

### **Double spacing**

Dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat.

## ***Examples of Font Styles, Alignment and Spacing***

# **CHAPTER TITLE**

(18 point Serif Font, Bold Capitals)

**HEADING - LEVEL 1** (16 point Serif Font, Bold Capitals)

**Heading - Level 2** (14 point Serif Font, Bold Capitals and Lower Case)

Heading - Level 3 (14 point Serif Font, Normal Capitals and Lower Case)

Heading - Level 3 (12 point Serif Font, Normal Capitals and Lower Case)

*Heading - Level 4* (12 point Serif Font, Italic Capitals and Lower Case,  
first line indented and subsequent lines further indented)

Body text (10 point Serif Font, Normal Justified Capitals and Lower Case, first line indented  
with subsequent lines starting at left text margin).

**or**

# **CHAPTER TITLE**

(18 point Sans Serif Font, Bold Capitals)

**HEADING - LEVEL 1** (16 point Sans Serif Font, Bold Capitals)

**Heading - Level 2** (14 point Sans Serif Font, Bold Capitals and Lower Case)

**Heading - Level 3** (14 point Serif Font, Bold Capitals and Lower Case)

Heading - Level 3 (12 point Serif Font, Normal Capitals and Lower Case)

*Heading - Level 4* (12 point Serif Font, Italic Capitals and Lower Case,  
first line indented and subsequent lines further indented)

Body text (10 point Serif Font, Normal Capitals and Lower Case, first line indented with  
subsequent lines starting at left text margin).

*Examples of Chapter and Section Headings*

You may like to note below the style and format of the text and headings that you intend to use in your thesis so that you can refer to them as you compile it.

<b>Text item</b>	<b>Format</b>
Body text, font name	
Body text, size (points)	
Body text, alignment	
Body text, line spacing	
Chapter Titles	
Headings, level 1	
Headings, level 2	
Headings, level 3	
Headings, level 4	
Headings, level 5	
Headings, level 6	
Other notes	

## The Thesis Contents

The contents of a thesis can be conveniently subdivided into three parts—the front matter, the text and the back matter. The following list indicates what can be, or should be, included in each of these parts and a suggested order for their presentation.

### **The Front Matter or Preliminaries**

- Abstract
- Title Page
- Frontispiece
- Dedication
- Epigraph
- Declarations
- Acknowledgements
- Table of Contents
- List of Illustrations
- List of Figures
- List of Tables
- List of Abbreviations
- List of Symbols

### **The Text**

- Introduction including literature or subject review
- Chapters, Parts and Sections including footnotes

### **The Back Matter or Reference Matter**

- Glossary
- Appendices
- Notes
- Bibliography or Reference List
- Index

Each of these items is dealt with in later sections. You may care to use the checklist overleaf to decide which of these sections you intend to include. Your choice is usually made in view of the general practices of your discipline, department and/or faculty.

This table indicates what must appear in your thesis and also allows you to check those optional items which you may also wish to include.

<b>The Front Matter</b>	<b>Include</b> ✓
Abstract	✓
Title Page	✓
Frontispiece	
Dedication	
Epigraph	
Declarations	✓
Acknowledgements	
Table of Contents	✓
List of Illustrations	
List of Figures	
List of Tables	
List of Abbreviations	
List of Symbols	
Other	
<b>The Text</b>	✓
<b>The Reference or Back Matter</b>	
Glossary	
Appendices	
Notes	
Bibliography or Reference List	✓
Index	

## The Abstract

The University requires that:

*An abstract in English of not fewer than 200 and not more than 500 words shall be a part of each thesis. The format shall be the same as that of the thesis itself. The front page of each abstract shall contain the following statement:*

*Abstract of thesis entitled .... submitted by ... for the degree of ... at The University of Hong Kong in (month and year). [see note on p.17]*

*Regulations Governing the Format, Binding and Presentation  
of Theses for Higher Degrees by Research.*

*(g) Examination scripts and theses and dissertations for higher degrees shall be written in English, unless the candidate is given permission by the Senate to use another language.*

*General Regulation G9, Assessments.*

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the following candidates may write their theses in Chinese and/or English:

- students in the School of Chinese;
- students in the Faculty of Education
  - (i) following courses, modules and programmes in Chinese subjects,
  - (iii) in Speech and Hearing Sciences;
- students in the School of Chinese Medicine;

The abstract, like the title, is an important part of your thesis, reflecting the standards of scholarship and language that this University considers worthy of the degrees that it grants. It is your responsibility to ensure that the abstract is an accurate, grammatical précis of the main findings that have emerged during the research that the thesis describes and the conclusions that you have drawn from these findings. It should not contain any references or footnotes and is normally written in the passive tense, i.e. “It was discovered that ...” not “I discovered that ...”. Please read the Abstract Preparation Guidance endorsed by the former Board of Examination for Graduate Studies in *Appendix 3* on page 58.

Your supervisor is required by the University to ensure that the abstract is in a form suitable for publication. It should be of the correct length, between 200 and 500 words as specified by the regulations, which is easy to check if you use the word counting facility that most word processing programs now include. The sample on page 18 indicates how an abstract of 200 words, in Times New Roman 12 point 1½ spacing, would appear on the printed page. Similar examples of 300 and 500 word abstracts appear on *Sample Pages 1–3* on pages 37–39). You should have the word count written and signed on one copy of the abstract.

Even if you submit a thesis written in a language other than English you should include an abstract in English. The abstract should appear before the title page: it is not numbered, or counted in the pagination of the front matter, or listed in the table of contents.

*Note: In order to ensure consistency of practice, it is recommended that you put the month and year of the **final** submission of thesis in the abstract, i.e. the month and year when the thesis is submitted to the person(s) appointed to oversee the corrections and amendments of the thesis, after the Board of Graduate Studies has approved the examination result.*

Abstract of thesis entitled  
**“Insert the Title of Your Thesis Here”**

Submitted by

**Insert Your Name Here**

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
at The University of Hong Kong  
in May 2017

Lorem ipsum. Dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis autem vel eum iriure dolor in hendrerit in vulputate velit esse molestie consequat, vel illum dolore eu feugiat nulla facilisis at vero eros et accumsan et iusto et odio dignissim qui blandit praesent luptatum zzril delenit augue duis dolore te feugait nulla facilisi.

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Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. Duis autem vel eum iriure dolor in hendrerit in vulputate velit esse molestie consequat, vel illum dolore eu feugiat nulla facilisis at vero eros et accumsan et iusto odio dignissim qui blandit praesent luptatum zzril delenit augue duis dolore te feugait nulla facilisi.

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*An abstract of exactly 200 words*

## Other Front Matter

Those pages of the front matter which are numbered, with the exceptions noted below, usually have their numbers in lower case Roman numerals (*i, ii, iii*, etc.); these numbers are usually placed centrally at the bottom of the page as a footer and are often italicised.

### Title Page

The title page following the abstract must obviously bear the title of the thesis (exactly as approved and as it appears in the abstract) and your name. You may also wish to add any degrees or professional qualifications that you hold as well as your name in your national script. The text on the title page should reflect the general style of the rest of the thesis that it introduces: it should normally appear in upper and lower case, not all capitals which is more difficult to read, and the text should not be too large, although you may wish to highlight the title and your name in bold style.

Strictly speaking, the thesis is only one of the requirements which you will have to meet for the degree that you seek, since there will also be an oral and/or written examination, and thus the following form of words might be used

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor (or Master) of Philosophy at The University of Hong Kong.

– then add the month and year of submission. (This should be the same as what appears in the abstract)

The title page is not numbered, or counted in the pagination of the front matter, or listed in the table of contents (see *Sample Page 4* on page 40).

### Frontispiece

If you wish to include a relevant, introductory illustration, such as a portrait of the subject of the thesis or a view of a study site (but not one of yourself!), it should follow the title page. The frontispiece is not a numbered page, or counted in the pagination of the front matter, and its title is usually included as the first item in the list of illustrations rather than in the table of contents (see *Sample Page 5* on page 41).

### Dedication

Should you wish to dedicate your thesis to friends, family or loved ones then this is where you should do it. The page is not usually headed as a dedication: it is not numbered, or counted in the pagination of the front matter, or listed in the table of contents.

### Epigraph

This is a pertinent quotation on the subject of the thesis, or one from a person who is the subject of the thesis, or some general guiding or philosophical principle. The

author of the quotation should be given together with a reference to the source of the quotation. The epigraph is not numbered, or counted in the pagination of the front matter, or listed in the table of contents.

## **Declarations**

The first numbered page of the front matter is usually any necessary declaration. The next section deals with the matter of declarations in more detail (see *Sample Page 6* on page 42).

## **Acknowledgements**

In the acknowledgements the author thanks mentors, colleagues, friends and family members. It is also the place to acknowledge financial support from scholarships and research grants. Each page of the acknowledgements is numbered in lower case Roman numerals (see *Sample Page 7* on page 43).

## **Table of Contents**

The table of contents, simply headed “Contents”, lists all the parts of the thesis (except the abstract, title page, dedication and epigraph which are not numbered and hence are not included in the pagination of the front matter) and the page on which they commence. Each of the major sections or chapters should be included in the list. The capitalisation and wording of the titles of every heading included should agree exactly with the way they appear in the body text. It is a matter of personal choice whether all the levels of subheadings which are used are listed or only the major headings are included.

Sophisticated word processing programs will automatically generate a table of contents, including the page numbers, if you have used a specified style to mark each level of subheading. Obviously this is the last section of the thesis to be prepared, otherwise it may not take account of any late changes that you make to the thesis (see *Sample Page 8* on page 44).

## **Lists of Illustrations, Tables, Figures and Appendices.**

Following the table of contents should be a list of any illustrations included in the thesis and the page on which they appear. Again, the numbering, capitalisation and wording of the titles of every illustration listed should agree exactly with the manner in which they appear in the body text. It is not usually necessary to include any additional explanatory matter which follows the title of the illustration. Strictly, the title of an illustration and its accompanying explanatory matter are referred to together as a legend (see *Sample Page 9* on page 45).

If you use a variety of types of illustration you may wish to list photographs, graphs, maps etc., separately. Extensive use of tables may also justify a separate list of tables in order to assist the reader in finding the necessary material. If you include more than one appendix then a list of appendices might also be appropriate.

It is not generally necessary to explain abbreviations which form part of general conventions, e.g. Systeme Internationale (SI) units, or common symbols. However, if you employ other less well-known abbreviations or symbols, or invent your own which is not a good idea, then you can either explain each one on the first occasion that it is used in the text or explain them all together in a separate list of abbreviations and symbols in the front matter (see *Sample Page 10* on page 46).

## Style

All the above-mentioned lists look more attractive if the entries are left justified and the relevant page numbers are right justified so that the page numbers form a regular column towards the right side of the page:

Title 1	.....	12
Title 2	.....	14

Whether you put a row of dots between the end of the title and the page number is a matter of taste; some word processing programs will do this automatically.

## Declarations, Plagiarism and Copyright

The University stipulates that:

5. *A candidate shall not impersonate another candidate, nor shall he permit himself to be impersonated at any assessment.*

6. *A candidate shall not engage in plagiarism nor employ nor seek to employ any other unfair means at an examination or in any other form of assessment. Plagiarism is defined as direct copying of textual material or willful use of other people's data and ideas, and presenting them as one's own without acknowledgement, whether or not such materials, data and ideas have been published.*

*Regulations Governing Students' Academic Conduct Concerning Assessment.*

*(a) A candidate shall submit sufficient copies of his/her thesis for examination, in accordance with paragraph 3 of the regulations governing the format, binding, and presentation of theses, together with a written declaration that the thesis represents the candidate's own work.*

*Regulations for the Degree of MPhil MPH13 and PhD PHD13,  
Submission of Thesis.*

*(b) A candidate shall not submit work that has been included in a thesis, dissertation or report which either has been previously submitted to this University or any other institution, or being submitted to any other institution, for a degree, diploma, or other qualifications. Original work of the student related to the thesis may be published prior to submission of the thesis and may be included in the thesis.*

*Regulations for the Degree of MPhil MPH13,  
Submission of Thesis.*

*(b) A candidate shall not submit work that has been included in a thesis, dissertation or report which either has been previously submitted to this University or any other institution, or being submitted to any other institution, for a degree, diploma, or other qualifications, except in the case of a candidate who has registered in a PhD double degree programme of this University and another institution with which the University has entered into a formal agreement in respect of the programme. Original work of the student related to the thesis may be published prior to submission of the thesis and may be included in the thesis.*

*Regulations for the Degree of PhD PHD13,  
Submission of Thesis.*

There is no specified format by which you can state that your thesis meets the requirements of these regulations. A sample of declaration is provided on page 42 for your reference.

In completing a declaration you should be aware of the related problems of plagiarism and the laws of copyright. Plagiarism is defined in the regulations quoted above. You should take the greatest care in acknowledging the work of others, whether it be through the use of marks to designate quotations or through the proper acknowledgement of sources.

All candidates also have a duty to observe the prevailing laws of Hong Kong which govern copyright. Signing the declaration suggested above, or any similar declaration intended to meet the same purpose, implies that you have acknowledged the provisions of the prevailing legislation and that your thesis complies with them.

You also have copyright protection for the contents of your thesis and should be aware of your own rights as well as those of others. Please refer to the following websites for information on copyright, plagiarism and research integrity:

Intellectual Property Rights Policy: <http://www.rss.hku.hk/contracts/ipr>

Policy on Research Integrity: <http://www.rss.hku.hk/integrity/rcr/policy>

The Libraries' website: <http://lib.hku.hk/copyright/index.html>

## **Requirements for Submission of Electronic Theses to the Libraries**

### **Requirement**

Students on successful completion of study shall deposit a soft copy of the thesis with the Libraries. Submission is available online at <http://etd.lib.hku.hk>. Detailed specifications regarding the format of electronic theses will be provided by the Librarian from time to time (please see the section on format overleaf). The Libraries have undertaken to provide technical advice to students in this respect.

Upon receipt of such soft copies, the citation information, abstract and full text of each thesis will become accessible on the Libraries' on-line database, the HKU Scholars Hub (<http://hub.hku.hk>), for open access and consultation, unless restricted access has been granted (see below).

In addition, students who register on September 1, 2017 and thereafter are required to upload their bibliography when submitting their finalised theses online.

### **Application for Restriction of Access**

As with existing practice, students will be given the option to seek approval for restricting access to their thesis. With effect from May 2017, the maximum period of restriction has been extended from three years to five years. On the expiry of the restriction period or in cases where the student's request has been rejected, the bibliographic record and full text of the thesis will be put on-line for open access and consultation. If a 5-year restriction has been granted, the thesis must still be submitted in electronic soft copy upon completion of study but will be stored and not made accessible by the Libraries until expiry of the 5-year restriction.

### **Copyright**

In this connection, clarification has been sought from the Faculty of Law on whether the availability of the theses through the Libraries' on-line database has any implication on the use by our graduates of quotations from copyrighted materials in their thesis. It has been confirmed that such quotations are permissible, as with the current practice, as long as the extent is reasonable, the manner is fair, and there is sufficient acknowledgement.

Concerning the copyright of the graduate's thesis itself, the fact that the thesis is deposited in the Libraries, whether physically or electronically, does not transfer the copyright from the student to the University. The student remains the copyright holder of the thesis, and has the right to prohibit others from publishing material from the thesis if his or her written permission has not been sought in advance.

## Online Format

Students should submit ONE file in text-embedded searchable Adobe PDF (portable document format) holding the entire thesis. If students have a reason to submit more than one file, please check with the HKU Libraries at [libetd@hku.hk](mailto:libetd@hku.hk). PDF files can be made from many different software packages, such as MS Word, Pages (Mac) and Tex/LaTeX.

Searchable PDF files enable full text indexing and thus facilitate web retrieval. The PDF format has been chosen because of its wide acceptance worldwide, its ease of creation and use, and its “portability” or compatibility with different platforms, such as Windows, Mac and Unix. Please note that a scanned copy of the thesis is not acceptable since such image files, even upon conversion to PDF, are not searchable. HKU Libraries provide utilities for file conversion and PDF creation in Level 3 Technology Zone, Main Library.

Besides the text-embedded PDF file, students may embed multimedia files in their theses. Acceptable file types are listed below. If embedding in the PDF is not possible, links from within the PDF to these outside objects can be done. Some common formats include:

Images	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• GIF (.gif)</li><li>• JPEG (.jpeg)</li><li>• TIFF (.tif)</li><li>• PDF (.pdf) - use Type 1 PostScript fonts</li></ul>
Video	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Apple QuickTime (.mov)</li><li>• Microsoft audio Video Interleaved (.avi)</li><li>• MPEG (.mpg)</li></ul>
Audio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• AIF (.aif)</li><li>• MIDI (.midi)</li><li>• MP3</li><li>• SND</li><li>• WAV (.wav)</li></ul>

Files in unacceptable or corrupted formats will have to be re-submitted. For more details and most up-to-date information, please refer to the web page, <http://etd.lib.hku.hk>, or contact [libetd@hku.hk](mailto:libetd@hku.hk).

## The Body Text

The earlier section on style deals with the choices you will have to make in settling upon the general format of the body text and the styles of headings (see *Sample Pages 11–12* on pages 47–48). However, you will still have to decide whether you will incorporate illustrations into the text or place them on separate pages. Many word processing programs can directly import graphics, tables and spreadsheets onto the page and permit them to be appropriately formatted in position for size and placement on the page. However, you will need to be quite skilled in the operation of all these programs if this is not to become a very time-consuming process—it should not be left to the time of writing the thesis to acquire the necessary skills. For ways in which to incorporate illustrations, tables etc. and their legends into your text, see *Sample Pages 13–17* on pages 49–53.

The way in which references are cited in the text must be consistent. The following examples show a generally acceptable form:

    Lorem ipsum. Dolor sit amet (Smith, 1994) consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet (Chan & Choi, 1984) dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat (Jones et al., 1990). Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat (Chan & Choi, 1985a, 1985b). Duis autem vel eum iriure dolor in hendrerit in vulputate velit esse molestie consequat, vel illum dolore eu feugiat nulla facilisis at vero eros et accumsan et iusto odio dignissim qui blandit praesent luptatum zzril delenit augue duis dolore te feugait nulla facilisi.

The first citation shows a single author and the year of the publication, the second shows a citation to a work by two authors, and the third a work with more than three authors. The fourth citation is to two works by the same authors published in the same year but distinguished by the suffixes *a*, *b* etc. Note that *et al.* should be followed by a full stop since it is an abbreviation for *et alia* meaning “and others”.

Some authors prefer to cite references by superscript numbers throughout the text and arrange the list of references in the order of their first occurrence, a style adopted by some journals in the interests of saving paper and production costs. Whilst this method of citation does avoid breaking up the flow of the text, keeping the correct numerical correspondence in both the text and the reference list as you insert or delete references in the text of your thesis drafts is a formidable task, but some word processors can do it for you.

You will also have to decide whether you are going to use footnotes or endnotes, which are explanatory or descriptive materials supplementing the body text, placed either at the foot of the relevant page or gathered together in a separate section of the back matter. Most word processing programs will allow you to do either: the word processing programs will format the note text and the note mark, and add the page numbers for endnotes. Whether you number such notes sequentially throughout the

whole thesis, or by section or by page is a choice which should be made before you generate too many such notes, since it may be difficult to change their format. This guide includes three examples of footnotes to show how they can be used.

Footnotes and endnotes are most commonly used by students of the humanities. Scientists and engineers use them less frequently but do make extensive use of a list of citations which forms a separate section of the end matter.

It is important to check that all the note marks and citations in the text have corresponding entries in the footnotes, endnotes, bibliography or reference list and *vice versa*. A lack of such correspondence is one of the commonest shortcomings in many theses: examiners will check this point and comment on it in their reports, often adversely. This is a job best done with the help of a friend, one of you scanning the text and the other checking the entries in the back matter.

## The Back Matter

### Glossary

You can, if it is absolutely necessary, explain the meaning of any abstruse, obscure, foreign or technical terms which you use in your thesis in a section of the back matter called a glossary. It is rather like a short, specialised dictionary and only you can decide whether this is a necessary addition to your thesis (see *Sample Page 18* on page 54).

### Appendices

It is sometimes advisable to include in your thesis details of materials, methods or data which are so extensive that they would interrupt the flow of the main text if they were included in the chapters of the thesis. Such material can form a section of the back matter, either as a single appendix with a number of sections or as a series of appendices, each dealing with a particular subject, method or theme. The titles of multiple appendices can be numbered with either Arabic numerals (1,2,3 etc.) or Roman numerals (I, II, III etc.) as preferred but the pages themselves are always given Arabic numerals which continue consecutively from the last page of the body text. The text should be in the same style as the rest of the thesis (see *Sample Page 19* on page 55).

### Notes

Endnotes are often used as an alternative to footnotes, but both types of note are sometimes used when the endnotes include a different type of material from that included in footnotes. Each endnote should, for the reader's convenience, include a page reference but there may also be other cross references to the chapter or section in which they are marked. The list of endnotes may be prefaced by a list of any special abbreviations of the titles, origin and location of source documents if these are not explained elsewhere, for example in the list of abbreviations in the front matter or in the bibliography (see *Sample Page 20* on page 56).

### Bibliography or Reference List

All theses must include a list of the source of information which is cited in the text. This may take the form of a bibliography in the humanities or a list of references in the sciences. The manner in which sources are cited is a major source of confusion in theses. Turabian's manual contains extensive guidance on the Chicago style but there are a number of other styles, e.g. APA, MLA, Vancouver, Harvard etc. Detailed guidance on the form of references is beyond the scope of this guide but there are two principal rules to be observed, especially if you create your own style of citation:

***1. Be consistent***

***2. Avoid abbreviations.***

It should not be necessary to explain the need for consistency but the most compelling, practical reason for avoiding abbreviations, especially arbitrary

shortening of such items as journal titles, is that they are difficult to check with spelling check programs. It is when you come to compile your reference list that you will reap the rewards of whatever time you have invested in ensuring that your personal bibliographic system is accurate and complete.

It is a gesture of consideration for the reader if you indent all lines following the first so that the list can be quickly scanned for a name, note mark or number (see *Sample Page 21* on page 57).

## **Index**

Most theses do not include an index: they are probably unnecessary but can be easily compiled with the aid of a suitable indexing program - if you judge that the effort is justified.

## **Publications**

You may wish to include in your thesis any publications which have resulted from the work you describe. Rather than ask the binder to bind them with the temporary or the final, approved copy of the thesis, since they are unlikely to be of the same size and are likely to lack adequate left margins, they can be conveniently inserted in a special pocket which can be provided on the inside of the back cover. This enables you to easily include any preprints or reprints of articles which become available at the last minute.

## Submission and Binding

Assuming that you submitted your provisional thesis title, and that you have coped with all the demands of writing and compiling your thesis, and that you have finally checked the text for spelling and grammatical errors, and that you have a final copy of the whole thesis ready to hand - then you are ready to submit!

2. *A candidate shall deliver to the Faculty Secretary sufficient copies of the thesis, presented in accordance with paragraph 3 of the “Regulations Governing the Format, Binding and Presentation of Theses”; ...*

*Procedures for the Degree of MPhil MPH14 and PhD PHD14,  
Submission of Thesis for Examination.*

3. .... *Each copy of the thesis with its abstract preceding the title page, shall be bound in one or more volumes either in the manner prescribed in Regulation 4, or in a temporary heat-sealed “Perfect” binding with the title, name of author, degree, date and the words “Temporary Binding for Examination Purposes” lettered on the front cover (or, if a transparent cover is used, then on the first page so that the lettering may be read through the cover). In addition, extra copies of the thesis abstract, which are not bound together with the thesis, shall be submitted. The Faculty shall determine the number of copies of thesis and unbound abstract required.*

4.(a) .... *The thesis shall be bound, in one or more volumes as determined by the Librarian, with its abstract preceding the title page, between boards faced with green cloth with the title, name of author, degree, and date to be stamped on the front cover and spine in accordance with the standard layout approved by the Librarian. The titles of theses written in Chinese shall be lettered on the cover in Chinese and in English. One copy of the finalized bound thesis shall be passed to the University Libraries for cataloguing and then accessioned by the University Archives. The remaining thesis copies shall be kept by the department and the supervisor(s).*

*Regulations Governing the Format, Binding, and Presentation of  
Theses for Higher Degrees by Research.*

Note that the University permits candidates to present their theses in a temporary binding and this is **strongly** recommended since it means that, after the examination process is complete, those pages which require no modification can be used again in the corrected, final copies of the thesis. Taking advantage of this provision may save you time, effort and money especially for those pages which have illustrations mounted upon them and which do not need to be changed.

The regulations state that temporary bindings must be of the *Perfect* type which involves the application of glue to the spine of the thesis and the provision of a heavy paper, or transparent, cover. In fact, it is now common to use a *Velo* (a trade name) binding which involves no glue but two thin strips of plastic on the front and back

connected by plastic rods passing through a few small holes punched in the paper: since the holes are small they do not interfere with the subsequent, permanent binding of the thesis. **Do not** submit your theses using the spiral plastic bindings commonly available. These require a large number of rectangular holes to be punched in the paper and thus the left hand edge has to be trimmed away later so that the thesis is no longer A4 size. Theses bound in this way, or typed and printed on paper of the incorrect size, will not be accepted.

Most students now take advantage of a photocopier to make the additional page copies required. This is probably also a cheaper, quicker and more convenient option than printing all the pages that you need on your printer if you have used a word processing program. If the illustrations in your thesis are half tone, i.e. photographic prints of anything other than line drawings with simple shading, then photocopies of them will be unacceptable and you must produce one copy of each print for each copy of your thesis. Do make sure that the photocopier you employ is able to produce good quality, clean copies without marks or smears and that the proper width of the page margins is maintained. Note that you will need a few copies of your thesis to submit to the Faculty Secretary but remember also that you will have to prepare a further copy for yourself, to use for reference and at the oral examination.

The following checklist reminds you of what is needed before and after the thesis examination.

	<b>Submission of thesis for examination</b>	<b>Submission of final thesis after examination</b>
Sufficient hard copies of the thesis as required by the Faculty	✓ (See note 1)	✓ (See note 2)
Copies of the thesis abstract that are not bound together with the thesis as required by the Faculty	✓	✓
Thesis Submission Form (To be signed by the supervisors)	✓	
Thesis Submission E-form: MPhil & PhD (For submission to the University Libraries, together with the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soft copy of the thesis</li> <li>• Bibliography (See note 3))</li> </ul>		✓
Dataset of your research, where applicable ( <a href="http://lib.hku.hk/researchdata/rpg.htm">http://lib.hku.hk/researchdata/rpg.htm</a> )	✓	

Notes:

1. The thesis submitted for examination shall be printed on one side or both sides of the paper.
2. In order to save a few trees and storage space, students are encouraged to print their final bound copies of theses to be submitted after examination on both sides of the paper.
3. RPg students who register on September 1, 2017 and thereafter are required to upload their bibliography when submitting their finalized theses online. Details on submission of electronic theses and bibliography are available on the website of the University Libraries.

## The Examination Process

- (a) *A candidate shall be examined by examiners appointed for this purpose both on the thesis itself, and at an oral examination on the subject of the thesis and/or the approved course of study and research. A candidate may also be examined by other means.*
- (b) *A candidate's coursework shall also be assessed by examiners appointed for this purpose.*

*Regulations for the degree of MPhil MPH14 and PhD PHD14, Examinations.*

Both internal and external examiners shall be appointed by the Faculty. Examiners shall normally be those who have completed a graduate degree at doctoral level in the discipline or in cognate area or have equivalent experience and should as far as possible have not been involved in the supervision of the thesis. The external examiner shall be preferably at Associate Professor level (or equivalent). Supervisors of the thesis cannot be examiners, but at least one of them is an ex-officio non-voting member of the Thesis Examining Committee, which is a committee appointed by the Faculty to consider the opinions of the examiners and determine the recommendation of the examination result. The internal examiner(s) and the external examiner(s) are voting members. The Chairman, normally from a cognate department appointed by the Faculty, is a non-voting member.

The external and internal examiners are given a maximum period of 6 weeks to submit their reports, and the Faculty Secretary is empowered to issue reminders of this fact during this period.

When all the reports of your examiners are received, the Faculty Secretary will organise the oral and any written examinations required. Those who must be present at oral examinations and guidelines for the way in which they must be conducted are specified in University documents reproduced in the *Handbook for MPhil & PhD Programmes* (see *Appendix 1*). All oral examinations have a Chairman, who is also the Chairman of the Thesis Examining Committee. The examiners present at the oral examination make a formal report to your Faculty.

The Faculty body dealing with thesis examination matters considers the written reports on your thesis, the reports on your oral examination, and the result of any written examination required, and makes a formal recommendation on the result of your examination to the Board of Graduate Studies.

The Board of Graduate Studies is chaired by the Dean of the Graduate School or his/her designate, and its members include the Chairpersons of the Higher Degrees Committees of each faculty, up to two Associate Deans of the Graduate School, and teachers co-opted by the Board (if any). The Board receives the recommendation of the Faculty and determines the result of your examination on behalf of the Senate.

The Board of Graduate Studies may determine that:

*A candidate who has satisfied the examiners shall be recommended for conferment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.*

*A candidate who has not satisfied the examiners*

- (a) may be required to resubmit the thesis after making corrections and amendments as required by the Board of Examiners, without a new examination; or*
- (b) may be required to revise and resubmit the thesis for a new examination within a specified period, and may also be required to satisfy the examiners at a new oral examination, or any other examination as appropriate, on the subject of the revised thesis and/or the approved course of study and research; or*
- (c) may be required to attend a new oral examination, or any other examination as appropriate; or*
- (d) may be deemed to have failed, without the option of resubmission.*

*Regulations for the Degree of PhD PHD16 and 16A,  
Thesis Examination Results.*

*A candidate who has satisfied the examiners shall be recommended for conferment of the degree of Master of Philosophy.*

*A candidate who has not satisfied the examiners*

- (a) may be required to resubmit the thesis after making corrections and amendments as required by the Board of Examiners, without a new examination; or*
- (b) may be required to revise and resubmit the thesis for a new examination within a specified period, and may also be required to satisfy the examiners at an oral examination, or any other examination as appropriate, on the subject of the revised thesis and/or the approved course of study and research; or*
- (c) may be required to attend a new oral examination, or any other examination as appropriate, within a period not exceeding six months; or*
- (d) may be deemed to have failed, without the option of resubmission.*

*Regulations for the Degree of MPhil MPH16 and 16A,  
Thesis Examination Results.*

Successful candidates recommended for the conferment of the degree sought will be informed of the decision by the Dean of the Graduate School. Unsuccessful candidates will be informed of what further requirements they need to meet, if any, by their Faculty Secretary.

## Appendix 1

### University Documentation

University documents concerning the preparation and submission of theses are included as appendices to the *Handbook for MPhil & PhD Programmes*. Please refer to the relevant appendices for reference.

- Sections of the General Regulations of Special Concern to Research Students
- Board of Graduate Studies
- Faculty Higher Degrees Committees
- Boards of Examiners for Higher Degrees by Coursework and Research
- Regulations for the Degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
- Procedures for the Degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
- Regulations Governing the Format, Binding and Presentation of Theses for Higher Degrees by Research
- Regulations Governing Students' Academic Conduct Concerning Assessment
- Guidelines for the Setting Up and Conducting Oral Examinations for MPhil and PhD Candidates

## **Appendix 2**

### **Sample Pages**

The following 21 pages suggest ways in which your thesis might be formatted and presented.

Abstract of thesis entitled

**“Insert the Title of Your Thesis Here”**

Submitted by

**Insert Your Name Here**

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
at The University of Hong Kong  
in March 2017

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*Sample Page 1 – The Abstract (300 words), not numbered*

Abstract of thesis entitled

**“Insert the Title of Your Thesis Here”**

Submitted by

**Insert Your Name Here**

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
at The University of Hong Kong  
in March 2017

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*Sample Page 3 – The Abstract (500 words), continued*

**Insert the Title of Your Thesis Here**

by

**Insert Your Name Here**

*(Your Name in National Script)*

B.Sc. H.K.; M.A. C.U.H.K.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for  
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
at The University of Hong Kong.

May 2017

***Sample Page 4 – The Title Page, not numbered***



The name of the artist in the portrait (1893 - 1935)

*Sample Page 5 – The Frontispiece (optional), not numbered*

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I declare that this thesis represents my own work, except where due acknowledgement is made, and that it has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this University or to any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualifications.

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## Acknowledgements

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## Abbreviations and Symbols

### Abbreviations

2,6-DNPC	2,6-Dinitro- <i>p</i> -cresol
5-HT	5-Hydroxytryptamine
AS	Anglo-Saxon
b.p.	Boiling point
bEP	β-Endorphin
CBS	Columbia Broadcasting System of the USA
CX	Flight prefix for Cathay Pacific Airways
DNB	Dictionary of National Biography
DOPA	3,4-dihydroxyphenylalanine
dr.	Daughter
EEDQ	2-ethoxy-1-ethoxycarbonyl-1,2-dihydroquinoline
EXCO	The Executive Council of the Government of Hong Kong
NAD	Nicotinamide-adenine dinucleotide (NADH)
NADP	Nicotinamide-adenine dinucleotide phosphate (NADPH)
HKU	The University of Hong Kong
HKUSU	Hong Kong University Students Union
LEGCO	The Legislative Council of the Government of Hong Kong
m.	Married
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
OT	Old Testament
sem	Standard error of the mean
SG	Specific Gravity
TVB	Television Broadcasts of Hong Kong Ltd.
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
USP	United States Pharmacopeia

### Symbols

DA	Change in absorbance
<i>e</i>	Molar absorption coefficient
<i>m</i>	Population mean
<i>s</i>	Standard deviation

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

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**Figure 1. Dramatic Masks.** Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, diam nonummy tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam.

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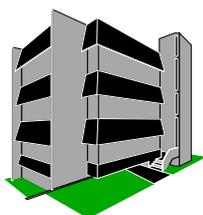
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Facing page 27

*Sample Page 14 – A Page of Legends facing their Illustrations*

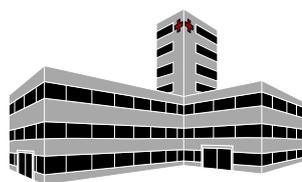
Figure 3. Buildings



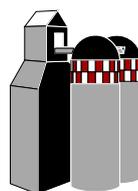
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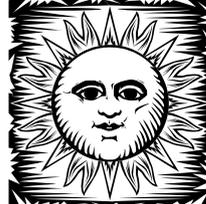


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Figure 2. The Seasons



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(b)



(c)



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| (a) Top left.     | <b>Spring.</b> | Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis. |
| (b) Top right.    | <b>Summer.</b> | Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis. |
| (c) Bottom left.  | <b>Autumn.</b> | Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis. |
| (d) Bottom right. | <b>Winter.</b> | Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis. |

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	<i>Column 1</i>	<i>Column 2</i>	<i>Column 3</i>	<i>Column 4</i>	<i>Column 5</i>
<i>Row 1</i>	0.55	0.43	0.17	0.87	0.25
<i>Row 2</i>	0.49	0.50	0.71	0.81	0.54
<i>Row 3</i>	0.82	0.66	0.87	0.02	0.84
<i>Row 4</i>	0.16	0.11	0.35	0.21	0.27
<i>Row 5</i>	0.84	0.50	0.08	0.30	0.90
<i>Row 6</i>	0.27	0.36	0.77	0.67	0.56
<i>Row 7</i>	0.33	0.37	0.22	0.19	0.19
<i>Row 8</i>	0.67	0.94	0.08	0.81	0.89
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.13</b>	<b>3.87</b>	<b>3.25</b>	<b>3.88</b>	<b>4.44</b>

**Table 1.** Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, diam nonummy tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam.

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## Glossary

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## Notes

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## Appendix 3

### Abstract Preparation Guidance

The Abstract is an extremely important section of any thesis. It must achieve a lot in a small space, and must therefore be written extraordinarily well. It has to convey the essence of the thesis: the motivation, the course, and the outcome, and so needs to be properly structured, concise and informative - a good advertisement for what is contained in the thesis itself. It needs to be sufficient to allow prospective readers to decide whether the thesis is relevant to their interests, and therefore worth the trouble of obtaining and reading it.

The structure of the Abstract should follow that of the thesis itself, but expressed more in terms of logical conceptual sections than actual chapters (the headings in italics below describe the content of each paragraph, and need not be included in the abstract):

*Motivations:* This opening section needs to establish the context of the work, the situation or problem that is to be addressed, or set out the argument that needs to be resolved; that is, the rationale, theory or observations that prompt the major questions to be investigated, thereby conveying the importance and relevance of the study.

*Methods:* This indicates the kinds of information sought, the approaches taken, and the materials, equipment, subjects, methods, data analysis and so on, as appropriate, actually used. These should be set out succinctly, but sufficiently completely that the essential nature of the work can be understood. It is legitimate to omit minor or side issues, collateral enquiries and non-critical preparatory studies.

*Results:* The principal findings, discoveries or outcome should convey the achievements of the work in terms as concrete as possible: informative, accurate, factual. Avoid a detailed catalogue of minor results, statistical significances, minutiae and trivia; avoid lists, especially of values or other items.

*Discussion:* Generally this should be limited to an outline of the principal lines of reasoning, sufficient and necessary only for the conclusions reached and reported in the Abstract. It is understood that the thesis discussion itself may be very long, complicated and exploratory; there is no room in an abstract for more than a very brief statement of the most important arguments.

*Significance:* The results need to be related to the context of the motivation, and the ramifications, implications, recommendations or conclusions stated. Explain the outcomes and their significance to the various fields of application or contexts, the anticipated impacts or value of the results and their interpretation. This is all as a means for the reader to assess the value of the outcome and thus of the value of taking the time and trouble to read the thesis.

An Abstract should not be a prospectus in the sense that a research proposal might be, nor should it be an elaborated “Contents” listing, detailing chapter by chapter the areas but not the substance of the thesis. The reader wants to know what actually was done, what actually was found - not plans, hopes, aspirations or expectations. It should indeed be informative, not vague, merely optimistic or empty; do not chat, do

not boast, do not overstate your case. There should be no literature references, although major authors or discoveries might be mentioned if absolutely essential to the motivation. The tenses used should follow the usual conventions: briefly, present for the current understanding, past for what has been done or achieved, future or conditional for implications. Generally, a passive voice is to be preferred to the active or personal. It should be carefully edited to remove empty words and phrases which dilute the real content, adding nothing to the substance. For example, do not start by saying “This thesis sets out to ...”. The Abstract must stand alone as an intelligible piece of writing to an educated reader, but not necessarily a specialist in the particular field. Do not use abbreviations, symbols or jargon without explanation; avoid parochial references that will not be understood elsewhere; avoid opinion, hearsay, guesses, speculation - even if in the thesis. In fact, include nothing that is not in the thesis. Remember that the Abstract will be published by the University and affects the public perception of not just the value of the work but of the value of the University itself.

This may be your only opportunity to enthuse your reader: it is your primary advertisement for the results of long study, for the quality of your writing, and the value of your work. Lack of attention to detail in this (as in the rest of the thesis) will cast doubt on your ability to be painstaking and accurate, and thus undermine your credibility as a scholar. Remember also that it is the first thing that your examiners read; do not prompt misgivings at this stage by sloppy work. Aim to impress. It deserves your full attention, and the involvement of your supervisors. Take your time: ensure that it is in good English, with accurate spelling and grammar, technically correct, and easy to read.

The Abstract is commonly the most difficult part to write, trying to encapsulate several years’ work into 200–500 words is hard. It is worth the effort.

*It must be emphasized that what is written in this booklet does not replace any of the University regulations and procedures. Whilst every attempt has been made to ensure the accuracy of the guide, the University regulations and procedures must be regarded as the authority wherever there is a lack of correspondence between them and this booklet.*



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