



# Aston University

## **GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR THE PRESENTATION OF THESES**

**Applicable to students in all Stages/years of programmes**

These General Regulations, approved by the University Senate, set out the requirements for presentation of theses for MSc/MA (by Research), MPhil, MD, PhD and professional doctorate awards.

### **CONTENTS**

1	Introduction	2
2	Presentation	2
3	Content	3
4	Binding	7
5	Resubmitted Theses	9
6	Sample Title Page of Thesis	10

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The responsibility for the production of the required number of copies of the research thesis lies solely with the student (see section 4).
- 1.2 Where additional copies of the thesis are requested by an Executive Dean or other individual, the cost of producing the extra copy or copies must be met by the person(s) making the request.
- 1.3 The cost of amending the thesis following an unsuccessful examination, including rebinding if necessary, must be met by the student.
- 1.4 Any theses which are not presented in accordance with these Regulations, or whose presentation is not of a sufficiently high standard, may be returned to the student and will not be accepted for examination or re-examination until the faults have been corrected.
- 1.5 The thesis should be proof-read carefully for typographical errors before being submitted.

## 2 PRESENTATION

- 2.1 All the copies of the thesis must be prepared with the same quality of paper and identical text, diagrams etc.
- 2.2 **Language**
  - 2.2.1 The thesis must be written in English, except where Regulation 2.2.2 (below) applies.
  - 2.2.2 A research student in the School of Languages and Social Sciences may submit the thesis in one of the languages taught and examined in that School providing that permission has already been granted at the time of the first annual report.
- 2.3 **Paper and Layout**
  - 2.3.1 The thesis must be printed on white A4 size paper of good quality, between 70gsm and 100gsm weight.
  - 2.3.2 Only one side of the paper should be used and the thesis should be bound so that text appears only on the right hand pages.
- 2.4 **Font Size**
  - 2.4.1 Textual material should be printed in black ink only using a clear 11 point font (e.g. Arial) (i.e. the height of lower-case text should be around 2mm).
- 2.5 **Spacing**
  - 2.5.1 Single spacing must be used for the thesis summary, indented quotations, footnotes, formulae and diagrams, and may be used in Appendices and References.

- 2.5.2 Double spacing or 1.5 spacing must be used for all other textual material throughout the thesis.
- 2.6 **Margins:** The margins of the thesis when bound should measure not less than 35mm at the binding edge (left-hand side) and not less than 15mm for the other margins.
- 2.7 **Page Numbers**
- 2.7.1 Every page of the thesis must be numbered consecutively from beginning to end, beginning with the title page and including pages of diagrams, photographs, and the appendices.
- 2.7.2 Roman numerals (i, ii, iii etc) are not to be used.
- 2.7.3 The page numbers should be placed centrally at the top or the foot of each page, not in the margin. They do not need to be preceded by the word 'Page', e.g. Page 1 etc.
- 2.7.4 If the thesis occupies more than one volume, the second and subsequent volumes should begin with page 1 rather than continue the numbers from the preceding volume.
- 2.8 **Figures:** Figures, tables, diagrams etc must be labelled and numbered separately. (See Regulation 3.6 below).
- 2.9 **Length**
- 2.9.1 Theses presented for the award of MSc/MA (by Research) should not normally exceed 30,000 words in length, excluding appendices.
- 2.9.2 Theses presented for the award of Doctor of Medicine (MD) should not normally exceed 50,000 words in length, excluding appendices.
- 2.9.3 MPhil or doctoral theses (apart from MD) should not normally exceed 80,000 words in length, excluding appendices. Theses for professional doctorates (e.g. DBA, DOptom) may be shorter than for a traditional PhD.
- 2.9.4 Theses that exceed the word limit will not normally be accepted for examination and any student who anticipates exceeding the word limit should seek the advice of their Supervisor before submitting the thesis.

### 3 CONTENT

#### 3.1 Order of Items

The thesis must contain the following items in the order given (see below for more information on the items):

Title Page  
Thesis Summary  
Dedication (optional)  
Acknowledgements (if appropriate)  
List of Contents  
List of Abbreviations (if applicable)  
List of Tables, Figures etc.

Main Text of Thesis  
List of References\*  
Appendices\*

\* If the appendices are to be bound in a separate volume, then the list of references should be placed at the end of the volume which contains the main text of the thesis.

### 3.2 Title Page

The title page of every volume of the thesis must contain the following information:

- the full title of the thesis (and sub-title, if any), as agreed with the Supervisor;
- the volume number, if more than one volume will be submitted;
- the full name of the research student (must match the name the student has enrolled under on the University's student records system);
- the degree, written in full, for which the student is enrolled (e.g. Doctor of Philosophy);
- the official title of the University ('Aston University');
- the month and year of first submission for examination or, if re-submitted, the month and year of re-submission for re-examination (i.e. not the month/year of the *viva voce* examination or award);
- the following copyright statement:

©full name of research student, year of submission (or resubmission for a re-examined thesis), e.g. ©Any Person, 2014

[full name of research student] asserts [his/her] moral right to be identified as the author of this thesis

"This copy of the thesis has been supplied on condition that anyone who consults it is understood to recognise that its copyright rests with its author and that no quotation from the thesis and no information derived from it may be published without appropriate permission or acknowledgement."

A sample title page is given at the end of these Regulations.

### 3.3 Thesis Summary

3.3.1 The thesis summary is a concise description of the work undertaken and should contain reference to the problem to be addressed, the approach taken, the key results and conclusion. It must be written in English, and printed in single spacing. All the information should be contained on one sheet of A4 paper unless the 3,000 word synopsis applies (see Regulation 3.3.3 below).

3.3.2 The summary must be headed 'Aston University', and give:

- the full title of the thesis (and sub-title, if any);
- the full name of the research student;
- the degree for which the student is enrolled;
- the year of submission or, if re-submitted, the year of re-submission.

3.3.3 The summary itself should not exceed 300 words, or 3,000 if the student has obtained permission to submit the thesis in a foreign language.

- 3.3.4 At the end of the summary there must be up to five key words or phrases (excluding those in the title) which can be used as index terms by the British Library for the national Index to Theses.

### 3.4 **Acknowledgements**

Any collaborative work must be clearly acknowledged by the student in a signed statement submitted with the thesis and this acknowledgment should be included with any others on this page.

### 3.5 **List of Contents**

- 3.5.1 All chapters, sections and relevant subdivisions of the thesis must be listed in the correct sequence, with page numbers.
- 3.5.2 If the thesis comprises more than one volume, the contents of the whole thesis must be listed in the first volume. Each subsequent volume must contain a list of its particular contents, with page numbers.

### 3.6 **List of Tables, Figures, etc.**

All tables, figures, photographs, diagrams etc. must be listed in the correct order in which they appear in the text (and Appendices), with page numbers.

### 3.7 **Main Text of Thesis**

- 3.7.1 The thesis must be divided as appropriate into chapters, sections and, if necessary, other sub-divisions. Each chapter must have a title and begin on a new page. Any system of headings or numbering of sections or sub-sections must be used consistently.
- 3.7.2 Every table, diagram or illustration must be clearly labelled and numbered. Wherever possible they should be placed near the text to which they relate.
- 3.7.3 Illustrations which cannot be reproduced digitally must be clearly labelled and numbered and either permanently bonded to the appropriate page of the thesis or enlarged to A4 size and bound into the thesis.
- Students should remember that if they include colour photographs, or tables or diagrams using colour, the full meaning may be lost when they are reproduced in monochrome e.g. when photocopied.
- 3.7.4 If abbreviations that are not commonly used are included in the thesis, the first use of the abbreviation should appear in brackets after the full wording. If many abbreviations are used, they should be included with their full wording in a list at the beginning of the thesis and be referenced in the List of Contents.

### 3.8 **List of References**

- 3.8.1 All published material referred to in the text of the thesis must be clearly identified.

- 3.8.2 The student must use a consistent system of notation and must provide sufficient information for future readers to identify the publication and locate the specific section referred to.
- 3.8.2.1 References to **books** should include the name of the author, the title of the book, the name of the publisher and year and place of publication.
- 3.8.2.2 References to **articles** in periodicals should include the name, with initials, of all the authors, the title of the contribution, the title of the publication, the volume number, number of first and last pages, and year of publication.
- 3.8.2.3 References to **conference proceedings** should include the name of the conference, the name(s) of any sponsoring bodies, the date when and place where the conference was held, the date and place of publication, the publisher, and the editor if applicable.
- 3.8.2.4 References to **reports** should include the series name and number where there is one.
- 3.8.2.5 References to **publications available electronically** should include the type of electronic medium (e.g. CD-ROM, World Wide Web page), as many details of publication as are available and, where publication details are not clear, the date accessed and the internet location.
- 3.8.2.6 References to **chapters in edited books** should include the name of the author, year of publication, title of chapter, title of book, editor(s) of book, pages of chapter, name of publisher and year and place of publication.
- 3.8.2.7 References to **working papers** should include author, date (month and year) and publisher or equivalent.
- 3.9 **Appendices**
- 3.9.1 Any material which the student considers to be an important and relevant part of the argument in the thesis, but whose bulk would interrupt its flow (e.g. published work), should appear as an Appendix.
- 3.9.2 The Appendices should not contain information which is already included in the main text of the thesis.
- 3.10 **Additional Unbound Material**
- 3.10.1 Whenever practicable, diagrams, maps, illustrations, computer printouts and tables must be bound into the thesis.
- 3.10.2 Every item of unbound material must be clearly labelled with
- 'Aston University';
  - the full title of the thesis;
  - the surname and initials of the research student;
  - the degree for which the student is enrolled;
  - the month and year of first submission or, if re-submitted, the month and year of re-submission for re-examination (i.e. not the month/year of the *viva voce* examination or award).

3.10.3 A small amount of unbound material may be stored in a pocket at the end of the thesis. Larger amounts should be packaged in a rigid container labelled as in Regulation 3.10.2 above.

### 3.11 **Audio Visual or Electronic Material**

3.11.1 Additional audio-visual or electronic materials may be submitted in the form of **microfiche, microfilm, slides or compact disk** (or CD-ROM/DVD or other methods of long term storage of computer programmes or data files), providing they are of a high quality, and the format and details of any special software or hardware required to read the material is clearly stated.

3.11.2 All items must be described, numbered and identified by format and quantity in the List of Contents. Transcriptions of audio speech recordings should be included in the text of the thesis.

3.11.3 Each item must be labelled, the label to show the number assigned to the item in the List of Contents, the author's name and initials, degree and date, and a brief description of the contents. If the item is itself in an individual box or container e.g. disks, then both the item and the container must be so labelled.

3.11.4 Microfiche may be inserted into a pocket at the end of the thesis, but as far as possible all other audio-visual items should be boxed in numbered A4 size containers and labelled as in 3.10.2 above. If there is more than one box, each box should be numbered and the label should indicate inclusive item numbers of the contents.

3.11.5 If an individual tape or disk etc. contains more than one discrete item this should be indicated in the List of Contents and adequate indication given to locate speedily the beginning of each separate record.

3.11.6 At least two complete copies of all audio-visual material must be submitted with the three copies of the thesis.

### 3.12 **Research Data**

Research data (methods and results) should be documented in a manner that would facilitate replication by independent researchers and audit. Raw data should not be submitted with the thesis but it must be made available, on request, to Supervisors and, subject to ethical and confidentiality considerations, to Examiners.

## 4 **BINDING**

### 4.1 **Submission before Examination**

4.1.1 The three copies of the thesis submitted before the examination should be loose- or soft-bound.

4.1.2 Loose-bound copies of the thesis will be accepted only in a good spring binder which does not require holes to be punched in the pages. Soft-bound copies of the thesis should have an acetate or plain card front cover, a plain card rear cover, and a glued spine.

- 4.1.3 The loose- or soft-bound copies of the thesis must be accompanied by an electronic copy, saved as a single protected file. The electronic copy of the thesis may be sent to an External Examiner by the School Research Office, on request and in appropriate circumstances.
- 4.1.4 The electronic copy of the thesis may be uploaded to plagiarism detection software and if the electronic format is not compatible, the student may be required to provide an alternative electronic copy of the thesis.

## 4.2 Submission after Examination

- 4.2.1 After the *viva voce* examination, the student must submit to the School Research Office at least two hard copies of the thesis, bound in the manner prescribed in Regulations 4.2.3 to 4.2.6 below, and an electronic copy, all of which must incorporate any corrections required by the Examiners.
- 4.2.2 The copies of the thesis must be accompanied by a signed statement from the Internal Examiner (or nominated External Examiner in the case of a staff candidate) certifying that they are identical versions of the work assessed by the Examiners, except where minor corrections were made at their request.
- 4.2.3 Each hard copy thesis will be A4 in size and must be bound between black rigid boards in a manner which ensures that all the pages are permanently secured. A high quality sewn binding is recommended.
- 4.2.4 No single volume should exceed 400 pages unless an acceptably strong means of binding has been used.
- 4.2.5 The spine of the thesis must be *embossed* with the following information in gold lettering 5, 6 or 7 mm in size, reading along the spine from the top to the bottom:
- initials and surname of the student as held in the University's student record system
  - the degree (abbreviated e.g. PhD, MPhil, DBA, DOptom, MD) for which the student is recommended
  - the year of first submission of the thesis for examination or, if re-submitted, the year of re-submission of the thesis for re-examination.
  - the number of the volume (if more than one).

No further information may be included.

- 4.2.6 The front cover of the thesis may be embossed with the title of the thesis in 5, 6 or 7mm gold lettering. No further information may be included.
- 4.2.7 Two copies of any audio visual or electronic material should be submitted, presented as in Regulation 3.11.
- 4.2.8 The bound copies of the thesis must be accompanied by an electronic copy. The preferred format for the electronic copy is a single unprotected Portable Document Format (PDF) file but separate PDF files (e.g. for each chapter) will be acceptable, provided that the sequence is clear and the student accepts that the file will be joined together in a single PDF. The electronic copy will be accompanied by the Deposit



Agreement Form, signed by the student, and the Third Party Waiver Form, signed by the owner of any third party copyright material included in the thesis. They will be retained by Aston University's Library and Information Services.

- 4.2.9 The electronic copy must be clearly marked with the student's full name and Student Number.
- 4.2.10 Where a student who submitted for PhD is recommended for the award of MPhil, the references to Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) should be amended to Master of Philosophy or MPhil on the title page, thesis summaries and the spine of the bound copies of the thesis.

## **5 RESUBMITTED THESES**

- 5.1 The above requirements apply equally to first submission and resubmission of the thesis, with one exception: where a student is required to resubmit a former PhD thesis for the degree of MPhil, the references to Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) should be amended to Master of Philosophy or MPhil on the title page, thesis summaries and the spine of the bound copies of the thesis. The date the thesis was resubmitted for re-examination rather than the date of the first submission should be used, including in the copyright statement.

**6 SAMPLE TITLE PAGE OF THESIS**

THE FULL TITLE OF THE THESIS AS AGREED WITH THE SUPERVISOR

The sub-title of the thesis (if applicable)  
should follow the full title of the thesis

VOL I (if applicable)

THE FULL NAME OF THE RESEARCH STUDENT

Doctor/Master of Philosophy / Doctor of Business Administration / Doctor of  
Medicine / Doctor of Optometry / Doctor of Pharmacy/ MSc/MA (by  
Research)

ASTON UNIVERSITY

Month and year of submission (or re-submission)

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