GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF A THESIS

PREPARED FOR THE SCHOOL OF ACCOUNTANCY

IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

by

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Forward

The material for this brochure has been gathered and presented in an attempt to help students to understand the thesis and research report requirements of the BCom (Honours), the MCom (Honours) and PhD undertaken in the School of Accountancy.

The brochure may also help supervisors by relieving them of some of the burden of repeating to each candidate the various guidance details relating to the preparation and presentation of a satisfactory thesis or report.

R.C. Olsson
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THE VALUE OF RESEARCH TRAINING

The disciplines of Finance, Accounting and Information Systems, are essentially applied arts. They are concerned primarily with the provision of knowledge to solve problems rather than with increasing knowledge. But like other applied arts such as medicine and engineering, the process of problem solving should be scientific. It should employ knowledge which has been developed in related fields of study particularly mathematics and statistics and other disciplines of social science - economics, sociology and psychology - and should proceed in a scientific manner to apply this knowledge. When it becomes necessary for finance, accounting or information systems to contribute to knowledge it should proceed as though it were a science.

Research training should not be considered of value only to potential academics. Research training is equally valuable to potential business and professional leaders. Typically, business or commercial research has been limited to fact gathering - to collection as accurately as possible, of the data needed to describe or report on events, practices or conditions such as managerial practices, community purchasing power, manufacturers sales trends, share price movements and the like. Often insufficient thought has been given to the development and testing of concepts, hypotheses, principles and theories or to their use in problem solving and decision making.

The employment of scientific method leads to a better understanding not only of a discipline but to decision making in the firm or profession. It makes clear the distinction between reporting, description and explanation.

The experience gained from undertaking a research thesis or report enables the student to distinguish between research tools and techniques and the research process. It provides an insight into the formation of concepts. It increases the understanding of the relationship among empirical observations, generalizations, principles, laws and theories. If in addition the researcher knows techniques which are pertinent to his or her field of study, he or she will be in a really good position to understand and conduct research.

WHAT IS MEANT BY THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD?

The scientific method has been developed over the centuries for systematically increasing knowledge, and although it is not the only means for increasing knowledge, it has proven to be the most effective. The great strides in human understanding and technological development during the last three or four centuries were made possible primarily by scientific research.

Without any doubt, the work of fact gathering and classification is important and makes a valuable contribution to knowledge. In fact this type of activity can represent the beginning of a scientific effort to develop a field of knowledge in a field. But data collection and classification alone, no matter how carefully or how accurately done, are only part of scientific research. In addition to gathering facts, scientific research attempts to understand the
significance of the facts. It attempts to discover and explain patterns, regularities and relationships. It seeks prediction based on understanding. In addition to using techniques of data collection, the researcher also works with concepts, principles, hypotheses, models and theories.

**Steps in Scientific Thinking**

**Concepts**

Concepts are the building blocks of scientific investigations. They are inventions of the human mind to provide a means for organizing and understanding observations. Concepts are not the same things as the phenomena being observed. For example, total cost, average cost and incremental cost are concepts each suggesting different ways for regarding phenomena. The phenomena does not differ - only the way of thinking about it differs.

Concepts, if well defined, can place in the hands of the researcher a tool to guide observations and a scheme to be used in classifying the information collected. Accounting for example provides a scheme for classifying and recording monetary transactions of the firm. One of the functions of an accounting scholar is to be continuously on the alert to analyze the effectiveness of his classification system for handling new observations.

**Patterns, Regularities and Relationships**

Having established well defined set of concepts, the next step is to establish the significance or importance of these concepts. The concept of average sales used for classifying a business firm's monthly sales does not, alone, increase our understanding of the firm. If, however, it is considered in relation to another concept such as average cost per sale, the value of the concept may become significant. We may find, for example, that we can predict something about average cost per sale if we know something about average sales.

If a researcher did nothing but classify business activity he would not understand much about his subject. Understanding begins with the analysis of the observations made to determine what, if any, relationships or patterns prevail among the concepts used in gathering and classifying data.

**Form of Relationships**

Critical in the study of relationships between or among concepts is determining the form or pattern of the relationships. Analysis of the familiar demand and supply curves are typical of the attempt to indicate the form of relationships. As the price changes, in what way does the supply or the demand change? Does a small increase in price result in a small decline in demand, a large decline in demand or no difference at all?

In accounting, numerous relationships are apparent but the forms of the relationship are not clear, e.g. there appear to be a number of relationships such as the one between the liquidity of the firm and
its ability to do certain things, but the exact form of relationship is not clear. However, the lack of information on the exact form of the relationship or regularity does not prevent satisfactory prediction under a variety of circumstances. However, the greater the precision of the relationships the more accurate and reliable the predictions.

**Hypotheses**

The term "Hypothesis" is used to indicate that a statement of a relationship is considered to be tentative and one to be tested and proven. This means that any statement, new or old, can become a hypothesis. A well-accepted statement dealing with a relationship can become a hypothesis if it is decided to test it.

Frequently the word 'hypothesis' is also used when questions of fact rather than relationships are involved. The statistician uses it in this sense. The classic situation is the test to determine whether or not a sample mean is representative of the universe. Marketing research often uses the term 'hypothesis' when seeking factual information on consumer behaviour. The hypothesis may be to the effect that the majority of the customers prefer brand A. The one use of the hypothesis seeks to deal with the problem of relationships, while the other focuses on just facts.

**Generalizing**

Research to determine the form of regularities also attempts to determine the various circumstances under which discovered forms will prevail. The researcher in studying relationships to learn whether a relationship is unique or if it prevails under other circumstances or between other concepts is attempting to generalize. Generalizations are typically based upon empirical observations - measures are taken and computations made.

Generalizations should not be thought of as true or false, but rather as applying or not applying under various circumstances. The generalization is a statement that science has concluded is worth making; but science also needs to indicate under what circumstances the generalization prevails and under what circumstances it does not prevail.

The steps so far have led the researcher to develop well-defined concepts; the discovery of the form of relationships prevailing among the concepts, and the securing of generalizations based on the discovered patterns providing a firm grasp of the subject matter.

There is, however, still missing a significant aspect for full understanding. This is the development of an explanation for the form of the regularity which has been discovered and the explanation for the generalization adopted. This is the role of theory.

**Evaluating Theory**

The role of theory is to suggest a meaningful explanation for phenomenon through a conceptual scheme which brings together statements (axioms) from which additional statements are deduced. A new theory suggests a new way to look at old facts but does not change
them, e.g. Keynes, in his 'theory of unemployment' did not change the economic facts of the day but suggested that they be regarded in a different way.

In evaluating a theory, one of the most significant questions to raise concerns the conceptual scheme it suggests for regarding phenomena - how satisfactory is this scheme? If a theory deals with concepts that are difficult to observe and for which it is difficult to secure data, it may be worthwhile searching for a theory that will provide a different conceptual framework. If a theory deals with concepts, empirical or otherwise, which are not well defined, the value of the theory will be limited. The logic of a theory is another aspect from which to evaluate a theory. Is the logic valid or are the deductions unwarranted?

The premises, axioms or assumptions of a theory may also be questioned. Have these assumptions been empirically verified? How well justified are they? How well does the theory explain existing knowledge? In what way is it consistent?

Of immense importance to research, does theory suggest new areas for research? Does it suggest new facts to gather and new hypotheses to test? How well is the theory as a predictive device?

THE BASIC REQUIREMENTS OF A THESIS

The basic requirements of a thesis is to enable the candidate to demonstrate his competence to:

1. do independent research;
2. make a contribution to knowledge through that research; and
3. document the research and its findings in a scholarly fashion.

- The research problem should be significant or important - that is, there should be some need, importance or significance in knowing the results.

- The problem should be amenable to research methods - e.g. the problem needs to be feasible as to availability of data and to techniques of analysis.

- It should be achievable in the time period relevant to the degree requirements.

- It should have a text material content excluding appendices and bibliography not exceeding 10,000 words (20,000 in the case of a PhD).

- It should match with the candidate's formal training, capabilities and interest.

For the purposes of clarification:
"Research" may be defined tentatively as 'any organised enquiry designed and carried out to provide information for solving a problem: whether a given piece of research is simple or complex, scientific or unscientific, useful or useless depends upon its objectives, its design and the skill and integrity with which it is conducted.

"Contribution to knowledge". It is generally accepted that a thesis should be based on a significant question, problem or hypothesis. The work should be original and relate to, explain, solve or add proof to the question, problem or hypothesis. The results are usually expected to result in generalizations and add to knowledge. The "contribution to knowledge" may arise, for example, from:

(a) New or improved evidence - e.g. as a result of improved method of data collection or data analysis.

(b) New or improved methodology - e.g. an improved statistical procedure (of significance).

(c) New or improved analysis - e.g. an analysis of implications of a current development in the field; an analysis of the content of an existing theory or concept and an analysis of its implications; or a comparative analysis - comparing theories or methodologies and analysing the implications.

(d) New or improved concept or theory - an entirely new theory or model developed to explain phenomenon in the field.

"Scholarly Fashion" - scholarship implies a 'trained mind' - the type of writing called for in the thesis is of the standard usually found in recognised academic journals. (In fact part or the whole of a thesis should be of a standard that would be acceptable for publication in a recognised academic or professional journal.)

Some Guides on the Level of Research

On the basis of experience and what appears to be generally accepted practice, the following guidelines are offered:

BCom (Hons) Thesis

- The research thesis represents 17% of the overall assessment of an honours student.

- The research problem should be based on studies undertaken in the BCom (Hons) degree.

- The nature and extent of the research problem should be one that can be initiated and completed in the final year of the BCom (Hons) programme.

- The normal length of the thesis is 10,000 words.

- The thesis is examined internally and the marks aggregated with the course work component to determine the level of honours to be
awarded (see over for weighting for honours subjects - BCom (Hons) degree.

MCom (Hons) Course Work and Research Report
- The research report represents one of the eleven components of the course work and report.
- The research problem should be based on the studies undertaken in the MCom (Hons) degree and relevant studies in the first degree.
- The nature and extent of the research problem should be one capable of being initiated and completed within a period of four sessions following the completions of the course work component.
- The normal length of the thesis is 10,000 words.
- The thesis is examined internally. Successful completion of the degree is determined by the completion of the course work component at an overall credit average or better and the completion of the research report at a "satisfactory" or "very satisfactory" level.

MCom (Hons) Research Thesis
- The research thesis of the "MCom (Hons) by research thesis" represents the major requirement of the degree.
- The normal time allocation is eight full-time sessions (or equivalent part-time).
- The research problem should be based on the studies undertaken on the BCom (Hons) programme supplemented by additional subjects prescribed on enrolment in the MCom (Hons) degree.
- The nature and extent of the research problem should be more than that required of an MCom (Hons) report but less than that required of a PhD thesis. The contribution to knowledge must be of some significance and may be expected to serve as a reference work.
- The thesis is externally examined when attention will be given to the thoroughness of the research in addition to the analysis, conclusions and presentation.

PhD Thesis
- The PhD thesis represents the major, if not the whole, requirement for the PhD degree.
- The minimum time allocation is three full-time years.
- The research problem should be based on the studies undertaken in prior honours bachelor and/or masters degree and is required to reflect the candidate's research competence and originality.
- The thesis is examined by three external examiners.
WHAT CONSTITUTES AN ACCEPTABLE RESEARCH TOPIC

Scientific research in business oriented subjects such as accounting, finance or information systems, as in any other field, is the use of scientific method to study phenomena considered to fall within the domain of the discipline. Its function is therefore as broad as the discipline itself. Whatever problems or whatever phenomena fall within the domain of the discipline are legitimate subjects for research. Some examples are:

1. Development of new accounting techniques for handling a particular accounting process.

2. Explaining the behaviour of business executives in making certain kinds of decisions.

3. Devising a method to increase the effectiveness of a particular accounting or finance decision analyzing an innovation in accounting or finance practice.

4. Testing a hypothesis which gives a relationship between specific methods (e.g. budget methods, Stock Exchange rules) and departmental or unit behaviour in forecasting or decision making.

5. Explaining the effect on authority of a new information system.

6. Inventing a technique to measure a specific kind of risk or premium or other important component of price or cost.

7. Explaining puzzling anomalies in published research findings.

8. A literature study carefully identifying strengths, weaknesses, assumptions, definitions, inferences drawn and avenues for further research.

9. An historical study accompanied by analysis or testing of the historical ideas.

10. A case study providing new ideas or information identifying further areas for research.

The broad scope of research includes using the scientific method to accomplish two fundamental objectives: to solve operating problems and to explain phenomena. These are two very different objectives which should be fully understood, not so much because of what or how the research is done but because of why it is done.

In the list of examples given above it will be noted that some have rather 'practical' objectives which appear to emphasize the solution of an operating problem rather than the increase of knowledge or understanding. This type of research is classified as 'applied research'. The criteria of accomplishment in these studies tend to be the success with which the problem is solved. Other studies in the list seek to increase understanding, and the criteria for their success is the extent to which they are able to develop an adequate or
satisfactory explanation. This is often referred to as 'basic research'.

The difference between 'applied' and 'basic' research, it should be emphasized, hinges on the objectives and goals. Applied research is concerned with objectives to manipulate things and people. It is operationally oriented. Basic research seeks to stand aloof from these objectives. Its sole concern is providing an explanation that will lead to a better understanding of the phenomena.

It should also be emphasized that neither basic research nor applied research should ignore concept formation, theories, laws, principles, assumptions and hypotheses. To ignore them is to ignore the method and product of scientific enquiry.

FORMULATING THE PROPOSAL

The preparation and acceptance of a thesis proposal is crucial in achieving the objective of timely completion of the thesis. After preparing the proposal the candidate will obtain a reaction from his advisor and from other research colleagues. Based on these comments he prepares a revision and this process continues until the thesis proposal is a clear crisp definition of the research project. The completion and acceptance of the proposal is a major step in the writing of a thesis. It clarifies the research problem, the data requirements, the methodology to be employed, the chapter outline and the timetable.

The Content of the Research Proposal

The proposal should provide answers to the following questions:

1. What is the problem, hypothesis or questions to be answered?

   A clear statement of what the thesis project is to do (expressed in one or two paragraphs).

   A list of several major questions that suggest possible avenues for research, indicating the one preferred by the candidate.

2. What is the importance of the research?
   What is the justification for doing this research?
   For example, is it significant to a major activity? Is there a statement from some other authority as to the need for the research?

3. What, if any, are the major research works in this area?

4. What is the anticipated research approach or methodology, e.g. data collection, survey, questionnaire, measurement, etc. (Major questions yet to be decided should be listed.)

5. What are the potential outcomes of alternative research approaches or methodologies?

For each research approach, the different but possible outcomes
should be described. For example, if a topic analysis proposed is a project to collect evidence by a questionnaire and to analyse the questionnaire results statistically to determine if there is a positive correlation between perceived behaviour and the responses to the questions; the potential outcome might be as follows:

(i) a significant positive correlation demonstrating the relationship;

(ii) a significant negative correlation demonstrating the reverse of what was expected;

(iii) a lack of correlation.

In this particular case, perhaps only one of the potential outcomes might be expected to result in an acceptable thesis. (It is in this way that alternative thesis topics might be suggested.)

6. What are the limitations of key assumptions – e.g. what key assumptions will be followed in building the model or experiment.

7. What are the tentative chapter descriptions?

Each chapter can be described in terms of its major headings or by a short paragraph of what will be covered in the chapter. These descriptions should be brief and highlight the structure rather than giving much detail.

FORMULATING THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Review of Existing Knowledge

The formulation of a research problem calls for a review of existing knowledge and of the relevant theoretical framework.

The basic building block of research is the existing knowledge pertinent to the topic. This includes established theory and empirical evidence, plus speculations by experts and by techniques that have already been developed. The basic researcher seeks to expand on current knowledge to explain the nature of the phenomena, he is interested in the problems of unsatisfactory explanations, untested or inadequately tested hypotheses, re-examination of the inferences drawn from empirical data, poorly developed concepts and conflicting theories.

In applied research review of existing knowledge may be drawn from a number of disciplines since the purpose is to review any theory which might increase understanding of the 'applied' problem to be solved. In addition applied research may also call for a review of proposed and successful solutions for the same or a similar problem.

As was stated earlier, the same phenomena can usually be conceptualized in different ways, even within the same discipline the same phenomena can be studied from different theoretical frameworks. The purpose of setting forth the theoretical framework is to indicate
explicitly the particular viewpoint within which the study will be conducted.

Where theory has been well developed and tested, the theoretical framework may simply summarize the theory and possibly give the hypothesis based on the theory which are to be tested by the study.

At the other extreme, the investigator, in lieu of theory, may give a series of assumptions and conclusions drawn from those assumptions. Typically the theoretical framework is based on something between these two extremes.

Problem formulation: Following the review of existing knowledge and development of the theoretical framework, the researcher can then proceed to formulate the problem to be solved, and to argue for the particular formulation which he/she has evolved.

The argument will be made in terms of - and rest on - the theory and assumptions. It may be decided that the next logical step in the development of the theory is to test hypotheses and this step will then be argued logically. On the other hand it may be decided that the next step will be to re-evaluate the conceptual scheme of the theory, analyze the logic of existing theory, or reconsider inferences from empirical knowledge.

For an example to illustrate how careful evaluation of existing theory can provide the basis for research see the Bruner and Meltzer article "Predicting Velocity: Implications for Theory and Policy" in the Journal of Finance, Vol. XVIII No. 2, May 1963, p.319.

Research Strategy

Once the researcher has formulated the problem, the next step is to consider the general approach to be taken to solve the problem, and formulating that decision, to select the specific tools and techniques which will be appropriate. Research strategies include sample surveys, field studies, laboratory experiments, construction of computer simulation, analysis of records and documents, analysis of internal logic of a theory or problem-solving technique to name a few.

This aspect of research planning needs to be carefully considered to ensure a sound basis for the selection of the specific techniques and tools that will be used.

Research Techniques

There are a considerable number of books available on techniques for collecting and analyzing data.

A researcher needs not only to become well acquainted with research techniques but also it is necessary to appreciate the theory which underlies those techniques. The effective use of sampling, for example, depends upon a sound understanding of probability. The proper use of questionnaires depends on an understanding of the problem of human communication and human behaviour.
Format of Findings

Although the format in which results will be presented may often be obvious prior consideration of the specific method of presenting the findings can minimize data collection and analysis problems particularly if computer packages are employed. In addition a statement of the proposed format of the research will make it clear to others what can be expected from the study.

Time Schedule

One of the most important problems facing any research student is how to manage his or her time. Having completed the research plan it is essential to set out a time schedule showing expected dates of completion for each phase or section of the plan.

Experience suggests that students invariably underestimate times for completion of the following aspects of research:

(1) collection and computerization of data
(2) computer programming
(3) data analysis
(4) preparation and checking bibliography
(5) the preparation and checking of tables.

It must be expected that completed chapters only emerge after many drafts.
EDITORIAL ASPECTS OF THE THESIS:
Title Page

The title page is the first page of the report and will include, the full title of the report in capitals, (single spaced and centred between A and B); the full name of the writer (in lower case and centred between A and B).

The title page is counted as page "i" - lower case Roman but numeral is not typed on it.

Do not underline any entry on this page.

WHAT THE BODY OF THE THESIS SHOULD CONTAIN

(1) Introduction

(a) description of the general problem area;
(b) the specific problem being researched;
(c) why the topic is important;
(d) research approach of the thesis;
(e) limitations and key assumptions;
(f) contribution to be made by the research.

(2) Description of what has been done in the past.

This section may be assigned one or two chapters depending on the extent of prior work. It documents the fact that the candidate's work is unique.

(3) Description of Research Methodology (one or two chapters).

The chapters might describe a data collection technique, a measurement technique or a method of analysis. In essence it describes how the research was conducted.

(4) The Research Results.

The results of the chosen methodology are reported; the data presented or the conceptual framework is described, the historical analysis is defined or the comparative analysis explained.

(5) Analyses of the Results.

This may be included in the previous chapter depending upon the type of thesis. It should explain the conclusions that can be drawn from the data, the implications of the theory, etc.
AN EMPIRICAL EXAMINATION
OF THE BLACK-SCHOLES CALL OPTION
PRICING MODEL

John Smith

A Report/Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Bachelor of Commerce (Honours)/Master of Commerce (Honours) to The University of New South Wales
The Certification

A candidate may not submit as the main content of his thesis or report any work or material which he has previously submitted for a university degree or other similar award.

The candidate is required to sign and date this certificate.

Enter page number ii at the bottom of the page and continue consecutively numbering at the bottom in lower case Roman the subsequent pages up to the beginning of chapter 1.
I certify that this thesis/report has not been submitted for a university degree or for any similar award.

John Smith
20.11.80
The Abstract

The abstract of about 200 words (600 words for a PhD) should summarize the important content of the work and should indicate:

(a) the problem investigated;
(b) the procedures followed;
(c) the general results obtained;
(d) the major conclusions reached.

It shall not contain any illustrative matter such as tables, graphs or charts.
The Preface

The preface should be rather brief consisting of a page but usually not more than two.

It should indicate the reason for the choice of the topic, the purpose of the study, the author's self-determined limits and the methods of research employed. This section should include acknowledgments of those who has assisted the author in his work.
Table of Contents

This section is intended to give the reader a brief synopsis of the content of the report and serves as a display of the subject matter discussed and the logic of its presentation.

The table of contents will include each major division of the report (preface, lists, chapter headings (and sub-headings), bibliography, etc.) In addition, the commencing page numbers for each of the divisions will be shown.
List of Tables etc.

List sequentially as items in the text, indicating the page numbers on which each is to be found. The page on which the list of tables is shown should be numbered at the bottom in lower case Roman numerals.
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Individual Regression Results</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Difference between Market Prices and Black-Scholes Model Prices</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>etc.</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Footnotes and References in the Text

Footnotes: should be kept short and to a minimum and be numbered consecutively throughout the text with superior figures (small figures above the line). Place the figure indicating a note at the end of the sentence of the text rather than after the first word to which it applies.

Example - Text: 

\[ \text{leading to the use of different tables for options of the same stock, but with different times to expiration.}^{17} \]

Footnote: \(^{17}\) or, tables based on specific assumptions about the relationship between stock price and risk.

Equations: should be referenced by consecutive numbering throughout each chapter on the right-hand side of the page.

Example - Text: \[ C_{AB} = r_{AB} S_A S_B \] (5-3)

Note 5 refers to the chapter and 3 refers to the third equation referenced in chapter 5.

Tables: should be numbered consecutively throughout each chapter as per equations above.

Example: Table 5-2.

References: References to books, monographs or periodicals are shown at the bottom of each page and should include the author's name and year of publication (with page number if necessary). Note that surnames only are used. Initials are added only when they are necessary to distinguish between authors of the same name.


(The complete references should be placed in the bibliography.)

Note the different method of citing references in the body of the text and in the bibliography.
Measuring the Value of the Dollar

Dual Function of the Dollar. The U.S. dollar has the dual function of being both a national and an international currency. Monetary policies must serve the national interest. There are differences of opinion about what the national interest actually is at different times and circumstances.¹ Monetary traditionalists may believe that monetary stability should be rigidly maintained; others think that monetary policy should be adjusted to maintain full employment and the use of all productive capacities, even if this entails creeping inflation. But whichever view prevails, "monetary policy must today be designed to serve the national economy.

The Dollar as an International Currency. The U.S. dollar is used in international trade and finance as a means of payment.

As an international currency, the U.S. dollar is used in international trade and finance as a means of payment.

What will happen in the case of a depletion of U.S. gold reserves and a collapse of the gold exchange standard has been outlined by Professor F. Machlup.²

The consequences of such a collapse may be manyfold, but most probably they would include reductions in

¹ Reimann and Wigglesworth, (1966) 51.
² Machlup, (1968) 141.
Bibliographies

The primary object of the bibliography is to give a concisely as possible all essential details about the sources of information used by the author.

The bibliography should be relevant to the text and not simply a general list of references for the field of knowledge in which the author is writing.

The items should be arranged in alphabetical order.

Methods of Citation

There are many ways to arrange a bibliography.

One acceptable method is as follows:

For books:

Author's surname, followed by initials in capitals
Year of publication, in brackets
Title of the work in italic upper and lower case
Edition or Volume, in roman
Publisher, place of publication, in roman upper and lower case.


For articles

Author's surname, followed by initials, in capitals and small capitals
Date of publication, in brackets
Title of the article, in roman upper and lower case
Title of periodical, in italic upper and lower case
(or boldface or underline)
Volume and number of part, in roman
Page numbers, roman upper and lower case.


APPROXIMATE TIMETABLE FOR PREPARING A THESIS

(a) BCom (Hons) Thesis

Year 3 session 2: Commence preliminary search for thesis topic

Year 4 session 1:

. Not later than mid session (probably end of April) present first draft of proposal at a project seminar.

. End of session 1 final draft of proposal approved.

Note: Approval of final draft of proposal implies:

(1) that the thesis topic is clearly defined and approved

(2) that the data collection process is completed

(3) that the methodology is clearly defined and accepted

(4) that the timetable for completion of the thesis has been prepared.

(5) that all arrangements for computer facilities have been made.

Year 4 session 2:

. Complete a chapter at a time and hand to supervisor for comments.

. Final draft of thesis completed (typed) not later than October 31.

. Bound copies of completed thesis lodged with Head of Department NOT later than 30 November.

(b) Timetable for MCom (Hons) Report and PhD Thesis are issued separately.

RESPONSIBILITIES

(1) The Candidate

Ultimate responsibility for the success or failure of the thesis must lie with the candidate. In particular it is the responsibility of the candidate (1) to ensure that the work of others is properly acknowledged and (2) to maintain regular contact with his supervisor.

The candidate should be required each session to write coherent accounts of the work to date and these may well form part-drafts
of the final thesis. In reviewing them the supervisor should take the opportunity to advise on matters of presentation and, if necessary, to suggest where the style should be modified. At a fairly early stage, the candidate should submit a survey of the relevant literature; this survey usually forms part of the final thesis.

(2) The Supervisor:

The role of the supervisor is to advise the candidate of such matters as the method of approach, questions of theory, source materials and editorial detail. Where errors are pointed out the onus is on the student to revise his draft accordingly. The supervisor must give final approval for the thesis to be prepared in its final form. This does not imply, however, that the report will necessarily meet with the examiners’ approval.

(3) The Examiners:

(See next page for the usual criteria used by examiners for evaluating a thesis.)

(a) BCom (Hons) Thesis

The examiners may

1. accept the thesis by assigning a mark out of 100. (Pass 50–64; Credit 65–74; Distinction 75–84; High Distinction 85–100)

An Honours student is expected to pass at a level of Credit or better.

2. accept the thesis but require the candidate to correct or amend some part or parts of the thesis.

3. fail the thesis – a serious blow for a candidate for honours!

(b) The method of examining the MCom (Hons) Report and PhD Thesis is issued separately.