

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
PART 1 THE PROCESS OF ACADEMIC WRITING	1
1 The research thesis	3
Getting the most out of yourself – why do you want to write a research thesis?	3
The nature and varieties of a research thesis	4
Shorter doctoral theses	6
Similarities and differences between a masters and a doctoral thesis	6
The thesis as research training	8
The characteristics of a good thesis	10
Academic writing as a genre	12
General university requirements for a thesis	14
Consulting research theses	15
2 The intellectual content of the thesis	17
The thesis as an original contribution to knowledge	17
The different kinds of data and evidence which can be included in a thesis	18
Working within a paradigm and incorporating a theoretical perspective	22
The relationship between ontology, epistemology and methodology	23
Testing a hypothesis or developing a theory	25
Exercising caution in making truth claims	26
Presenting alternative viewpoints	27
Developing a coherent argument	28
Intellectual content of a shorter thesis	28
3 Organizing your work	31
Who is the audience for your thesis?	31
The length of the thesis and of individual chapters	32
Practical matters – typing and organizing the developing thesis	34
Self-imposed writing targets	35

Time management and maintaining progress	36
Accumulating your list of references	38
The order of writing the thesis	39
4 The role of the supervisor	42
The functions of your supervisor or supervisory team	42
Selecting a supervisor or being allocated one	43
Appreciating your supervisor's perspective	44
Working well with your supervisor	45
What to do if you are unhappy with your supervisor	46
Negotiating targets and deadlines	47
Arranging a pattern of tutorials	48
Advice on methodology and design	49
Advice on structuring the thesis	49
Reading sections of the thesis as it is written	51
Selecting the team of examiners for the viva voce	52
5 Grammar, punctuation and conventions of academic writing	54
First person or third person?	54
Gender-neutral language	56
Layout for quotations	57
The Harvard system of referencing	58
Referencing websites	62
Use of notes and footnotes	62
Non-English terms and expressions	63
English and American spellings	64
Abbreviations	64
Italicizing and capitalization	65
The use of hyphens, dashes, numerals and the apostrophe	65
Consistency, consistency and, above all, consistency!	66
6 Layout of the thesis	68
Page layout	68
Use of headings, subheadings and titles	69
Frequency of quotations	70
Use of bullet points and formatting	71
Including tables and figures in the thesis	72
Listing references and including a bibliography	73
The use of appendices	75
Consistency, consistency and starting as you mean to go on	76
PART 2 WRITING YOUR THESIS	79
7 The preliminary pages and the introduction	81
Title page, abstract and contents	81

Tables, figures, abbreviations, key terms and acknowledgements	83
Why is this particular topic being researched?	84
What is the significance of the topic?	85
Explaining the context of the research	85
The background of the researcher	86
Where is the research being conducted and why?	87
The research aims	88
The research objectives	90
8 The literature review	92
The purpose of the literature review	92
Style of writing for the literature review	94
Subdividing the available literature	95
Dealing with an apparent lack of relevant literature	96
Making a selection from a wide variety of literature	98
Employing a range of literature	99
Literature from the Internet	100
How old may the literature be?	101
9 Methodology	103
The relationship between epistemology and methodology	103
Relating choice of methodology to the aims of the thesis	105
The overall research design	106
The selection of the sample	108
The process by which the data is collected	111
Data analysis	112
Strengths and limitations of the methodology	114
Writing about ethical issues	115
Should the methodology have been different?	118
Ethical justifications of research	118
10 The data analysis chapters	122
Defining a list of chapter headings	122
Selection from the data	123
Writing about the analysis of qualitative data	124
Presenting qualitative data	125
Writing about the analysis of quantitative data	128
Presenting quantitative data	129
Placing sample data in the appendices	131
11 The conclusion	133
Drawing together the threads of the argument	133
Examining whether the aims have been achieved	133
Emphasizing the contribution to knowledge	134
Developing practical recommendations	135
Limitations of the thesis	136

Possibilities for further research	137
A reflexive account of the research process	138
Writing the abstract	140
12 Completing the thesis	143
Producing the first complete draft	143
Checking for coherence and internal consistency	144
Proofreading	145
Checks to be made by the supervisory team	147
Checks to be made by supervisors, and those to be made by students	148
Temporary binding	149
Procedure for submitting the thesis	149
13 Publishing findings during preparation of the thesis	151
Advantages and disadvantages	151
Selecting an element of the findings	153
Selecting a suitable academic journal	154
Following style notes	155
The refereeing process	155
Checking upon the progress of your article	156
14 The oral examination	158
The role of your supervisor	158
The role of the internal and external examiners	159
Strategies for rereading the thesis	159
Anticipating questions	160
The structure of the viva	162
Coping strategies for questions	163
Defending the thesis	164
Overall strategy for the viva	165
Possible results of the viva	168
<i>References and Further Reading</i>	170
<i>Index</i>	173