MASTER OF FINE ARTS RESEARCH PAPER/THESIS GUIDELINES

LENGTH OF RESEARCH PAPER

The Master of Fine Arts thesis can take one of two forms:

- creative work and research paper, culminating in a substantial exhibition, performance or installation of works in a joint show of candidates at the end of candidature, together with a research paper of 10,000–12,000 words and oral presentation, or
- thesis of 35,000–50,000 words in the field of art theory, art history, cultural studies or professional studies in visual art.

At least seven (7) weeks prior to the oral examination, a candidate presents one electronic copy of the research paper.

Candidates proceeding by thesis only option submit one electronic copy of the thesis by their latest completion date.

The required word count includes the introduction, main text and conclusion. It does not include the summary (abstract), foreword, captions, footnotes, bibliography and in most cases appendices.

INCLUSIONS IN THE RESEARCH PAPER/THESIS

Each examination copy of a research paper shall contain:

- research paper text;
- a 300-word summary of the work (creative and written) presented for examination. The summary consists of two parts: an abstract of the content of the research paper and, where possible, a brief description of the creative work presented for examination
- if available, a full visual documentary record of the work presented for examination. In addition to the documentary record of work presented for examination, a candidate may also present other material generated in the course.
- a catalogue of work presented for examination as a typed list of the works, presenting such information as the title, media and dimensions of work (height before width before depth). This catalogue should also be included as an appendix within the research paper.

FOOTNOTE AND BIBLIOGRAPHY STYLE

You are expected to follow an appropriate and consistent convention of source citation and referencing. The Chicago Manual of Style 16th A is the preferred style at Sydney College of the Arts.

For full details and citation examples, the SCA Library has a subscription to the online manual. It can be accessed via Unikey at http://ezproxy.library.usyd.edu.au/login?URL=http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/16/contents.html

You can also use the print copy of The Chicago Manual of Style in the SCA Library Reserve collection or the online guide at http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home

The Chicago 16th A style is also available in EndNote bibliographic software.
You may consult other recent style manuals. Whichever convention you adopt, you must employ it consistently.

EDITING

PRESENTATION
All candidates must submit an electronic copy of the research paper.

Electronic copies must be submitted as one PDF document. Other formats will not be accepted.

The research paper must have a cover page clearly identifying the name of the candidate, the title of the research paper/thesis and the year of submission.

In the main body of the research paper/thesis one-and-a-half spacing is preferred, but double-spacing is acceptable. Single-spacing may be used only for appendices and footnotes.

The margin on each sheet shall be not less than 40 mm on the left-hand side, 20 mm on the right-hand side, 20 mm at the top and 20 mm on the bottom.

Beginning with the first page of the Introduction pages shall be numbered consecutively, using Arabic numerals.

The title page shall contain the research paper/thesis title, the candidate’s name, the title of the degree, the year of submission and the name of University of Sydney.

Except with the approval of the supervisor, images, illustrations, charts, tables, etc., shall be included in the text immediately after the first reference to them, as right-hand pages with the caption at the bottom, or if necessary, on the page facing the figure.

EXAMPLES AND SUGGESTED SEQUENCE OF PRELIMINARIES
This section deals with requirements for the preliminary pages of the research paper and gives standard format examples of these. Candidates are asked to observe their content and general layout, as well as the sequence of the following material
THE BROKEN MIRROR

by
Virginia Brown

December 2010
Statement
This volume is presented as a record of the work undertaken for the degree of Master of Fine Arts at Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney.

Table of Contents
- Acknowledgments (optional)
- List of Illustrations
- Abstract
- Foreword (optional)
- Introduction
- Chapter One (chapters may have titles)
- Chapter Two, etc
- Conclusion
- Endnotes if footnotes have not been used
- Bibliography
- Appendix (optional)
- Catalogue of Work Presented for Examination
- List of Images

Acknowledgments (optional)
Occupies a separate page between the Statement and the Table of Contents page. Please keep it short. “...I wish to acknowledge the help given to me in this project by my supervisors / consultants / colleagues / family ...etc.”

When a research paper has had the benefit of editorial advice then the name of the editor and a brief description of the service rendered should be printed as part of the list of acknowledgements or other prefatory matter near the front of the work, as outlined in Part 1 of the University’s Thesis and Examination of Higher Degrees by Research Procedures 2015, available online at http://sydney.edu.au/policies/showdoc.aspx?recnum=PDOC2014/375&RendNum=0

List of Illustrations
Occupies a separate page:
Figure 1. Title of Work, Name of Artist, Page No.
Figure 2.
Figure 3. etc.

Summary
Description of creative work. Please indicate date and place of exhibition; number of works; media; if relevant, title of exhibition; brief descriptive statement; and other relevant data. This is not the exhibition catalogue.

Abstract of research paper. The abstract forms part of the Summary, and simply states the problem or project addressed and a brief description of the method used in undertaking this project (a condensed summary or synopsis of the sequence and conclusions of the study).

Foreword (optional)
A foreword is optional and is generally to be avoided. It may be a statement about personal aspects of candidate’s project (i.e. why the candidate undertook it), about special assistance received, the context (social, political, etc) of the candidate’s work or other matters. It ought to be brief, less than one page.

Introduction
The following notes on the Introduction are adapted from Anderson, Durston and Poole, “Thesis and Assignment Writing”:
“An introduction should be written with considerable care, with two major aims in view: introducing the problem in a suitable context, and stimulating the reader’s interest. If introductions are dull, rambling, and lacking in precision, direction and specificity, there is little incentive for the reader to continue reading. An introduction may be chapter length and usually contains the following:
- a complete and concise statement of the subject being investigated for the general purpose of the study;
- a justification for the study, establishing the importance of the topic or material. It is appropriate at this juncture to indicate the limitations of the project and to define terms used in the study that have a special meaning or significance for the investigation;
- a preview of the organisation of the rest of the paper to assist the reader in grasping the relationship between the various parts of the paper;
- a clear indication of the methodology of the paper that is, whether it is a documentation of studio works, an essay, some combination of these, or some other. An introduction is usually written early, then completely rewritten after the main text has been finalised."

Main Body of Text
Because of the diversity of research topics occurring within separate disciplines, it is not possible to specify directions for organising the main body of a research paper or thesis. However, there are certain general principles, which should be followed:
- organise the presentation of the documentation or findings in a logical and sequential way, developing the project aims stated in the introduction.
- substantiate arguments or findings.
- be accurate in documentation.
- every effort should be made to write clearly and within a logical framework. This organisation may be assisted by a division of the material into chapters with headings and subheadings and a sequential organisation and development of material.

EXAMPLES AND SEQUENCE OF END PAPERS
The Conclusion
The following notes on the Conclusion are adapted from Anderson, Durston and Poole, “Thesis and Assignment Writing”:

“The conclusion serves the important function of bringing together the whole report. In summary form, the developments of the previous chapters should be succinctly restated, important findings discussed and conclusions drawn from the whole study. In addition, the writer may list unanswered questions that have occurred in the course of the study and which require further research. The conclusion should leave the reader with the impression of completeness and of positive gain. As with the introduction, the conclusion usually forms a separate chapter.”

Footnotes
These are placed at the foot of each page or each chapter; or as a group after the Conclusion as endnotes.

Bibliography
This may be divided into ‘Books’ and ‘Periodicals’ sections, or may be integrated.

Appendix A
Optional. Includes material (possibly by another author), which is of importance to the preceding text. Should be brief. Highly relevant material included here only because it cannot be integrated into the main text.

Appendix B
Optional. The candidate’s professional resume may be included giving information on exhibitions, publications, collections, and awards in standard form. Should be brief.

List of Images
A record of all images and other visual documentation materials as a typed list of works, presenting such information as the title, media and dimensions of work (height X width X depth),
Catalogue of Work Presented for Examination.

Where possible include a full visual documentary record of the work presented for examination. If not all work presented in the exhibition can be fully documented prior to submission of the examination copy, include images of work created during the candidature and process documentation of the work in the exhibition.

FINAL LODGMENT

After receiving notification that you may proceed to final lodgment, you must provide the University with a digital copy of the final, awarded version of your thesis. You will need to choose the appropriate level of access, and convert their thesis and any supporting files into the appropriate file format. The digital format for text is PDF. Formats for other thesis components (such as moving image files) will be outlined in guidelines.

The final copy of a research paper shall contain:

- research paper text;
- a 300-word summary of the work (creative and written) presented for examination. The summary consists of two parts: an abstract of the content of the research paper and, where possible, a brief description of the creative work presented for examination;
- a full visual documentary record of the work presented for examination. This documentation should be included in the thesis as an appendix. All work presented in the exhibition should be fully documented, including images of the installation of each work, details of major works (as required) and several views of three-dimensional works. If the final exhibition included moving image of time-based components, video documentation must also be provided. In addition to the documentary record of work presented for examination, a candidate may also present other material generated in the course;
- a catalogue of work presented for examination as a typed list of the works, presenting such information as the title, media and dimensions of work (height before width before depth). This should also be included in the thesis as an appendix.

The Student Guide for formatting your final thesis is available from the HDR Administration Centre.