

Guidelines

For Bachelor's And Master's Thesis.



Business School
The University of Lahore
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1 Introduction

The thesis is a very important and integral part of your academic studies; therefore you should be prepared to put in a lot of hard work and effort. This work should be done in the right direction and for this we have prepared this information pack to guide you through the process.

The thesis is an opportunity for you to apply some of your learning from your academic studies. You may have to develop this learning in more depth to prepare a high quality thesis and this will enhance your knowledge and skills in accounting and finance.

The purpose of the thesis is to give you an opportunity to demonstrate a range of Technical and Professional Skills in:

- Understanding of accountancy / business models
- Application of accountancy / business models
- Evaluation of information, analysis and conclusions
- Presentation of project findings

And high level skills in:

- Communication
- Information gathering and referencing
- Information technology

2 Thesis Proposal Format

A proposal is a statement of intent. It is a difficult document, because it has to be written before you have done the research. It should consist of 750 words (+/- 10%) and must quickly and simply communicate your research project to any reader. The proposal will likely require a number of drafts before you get it right, but each will bring greater clarity to your project.

A proposal should be written in an active voice, and make statements like, “this research will,” do so-and-so. You can break the text up with sub-headings, suggestions for which are included in the numbered sections below. But any reader will want to know what you will work on, why it’s important and how

You will do it. One way to convey this is to make clear what your main research questions are, why these are important questions to research and how you are going to do the research to answer the question. The reader will also require a quick picture of the overall structure of the thesis, and section 5 below will help to deliver this.

1. Introduction:

Following the title, open your proposal with a simple and strong statement describing your research topic. Use only a couple of sentences for this, and quickly show the reader what issue you intend to tackle. This needs to be more focused than merely to name a field of study. Remember also that you can give additional detail later in the document. To construct these introductory sentences, ask yourself: What is the central problem I am interested in? What specific question(s) will I investigate? What hypothesis does my research seek to test? What is my research about? What is its primary aim? What will it do?

2. Background to the Project:

Try to state, in a second paragraph, why it is that your chosen problem is important. Here, you begin to give background to the research project, and to outline the way in which your question relates to current debates in your area of study. It concludes with the reason your chosen topic is important. How do you justify your project? What is the point of doing it? What other research is going on around this topic? What is original about your project? What do you have to say that's different?

3. Project Outline:

Here, you can give more detail on what you will actually do. Having established why your project is important and new, and how it relates to existing research, you now have an opportunity to give more detail on precisely what your project will entail. What additional detail on the nature of the project does the reader require? Is there a particular secondary question you intend to address? What will your research achieve or produce?

4 Research Methods:

Try to describe how you intend to go about researching your chosen problem. It is here that you show the research method(s) (sometimes referred to as 'methodology') you will use to collect data, and the areas of knowledge you will need to cover in order to deliver on your aims. What literature, data, bodies of knowledge, must be covered in order to deliver this thesis? What research methods will you use to collect data? (Quantitative / Qualitative). Is the research primarily empirical or theoretical? If both, how will they be weighted and how will they relate? Is there a comparative component to your research, and if so, how will this work? Do you need special research or language

skills to collect your data? If so, do you have them? If not, how do you plan to get them? What problems must you allow for in using these research methods? Are there any ethical or confidentiality issues arising?

5. Provisional Chapterisation:

To give a sketch of how the thesis will be structured, list around six chapter headings with clear and communicative titles. Put a couple of sentences under each to show what will be in them. Indicate some of the literature to be covered in each chapter by including names in brackets.

6. Bibliography:

Up to ten key sources for your data.

Submission:

Submit the Project proposal in **a Plastic file** to your project mentor with your contact details written in the back inside cover. You may only start work on project after approval of your proposal by your mentor.

This approved proposal must be attached along with your thesis when upon submission.

3 Thesis Guidelines

Thesis: Format and presentation

It is essential that the Thesis follows the presentation and formatting requirements strictly as per the following guidelines and Sample Formatting Annexures. Failure to do so will result in project rejection / marks penalization.

LENGTH:

The total length should be as follows:

Degree Program	Min	Max
BS (Hons)	12,000	15,000
MS (Hons)	15,000	18,000
MPhil	18,000	24,000

The University of Lahore reserves the right to **penalize / reject** thesis which do not meet the word count limit & guidelines. Footnotes, references and text within tables are to be counted within the word-limit, but captions, appendices and bibliographies are excluded.

The breakup of the word count should be as detailed in section named "Structure of Part 1, 2 & 3" below.

You are required to attach a word count to your thesis. To do so, print out the word count on an otherwise blank piece of paper and include it as the last page in your thesis. Theses will **not be accepted/marked** without a total word count, and word-count for each chapter of the thesis.

WORD-PROCESSING.

Should be on one side of the sheet only and should be single spaced. Pages should be numbered.

PAGE NUMBERING:

Beginning with the first page of the Acknowledgements or Preface, if used, all preliminary pages preceding the actual text must be numbered in lowercase Roman numerals; e.g., iii, iv, v, etc. These numerals must be centered under the text with at least one inch of space between the number and the bottom of the page. If no optional pages are used, the page numbers must begin on the Abstract. Do not number the copyright page, title page, signature page, or dedication, but do include each of them in the pre-text page count. Do not count the fly page. The first page of the text begins at Arabic numeral 1. All pages within the text must contain an Arabic page number, bottom-centered, at least one inch from the bottom edge of the page. The first page of every major section (chapters, appendices, bibliography, Vita, etc.) must begin on a new page.

FINANCIAL DATA:

Wherever financial data is involved excel sheet will be used by integration in MS Word.

FONT:

Size 12, Times New Roman or Arial Font ONLY to be used for the thesis. Size 10 to be used for footnotes. Single spacing should be used throughout the thesis.

MARGINS:

Should be eight spaces (one inch) at the top and bottom of each page, with two inches at the left edge and one inch at the right.

FOOTNOTES:

Follow the foot- or end-noting conventions of the discipline with which the essay is most closely associated. If notes are given at the bottom of the page, a continuous line should be drawn from margin to margin between the text and the footnotes (or as long a line as possible).

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

The table of contents should be structured in a way as illustrated in the sample attached.

BINDING:

The thesis should be bound in a black hard leather binding. The title page imprinted on the front cover of the thesis should follow the Standard Formatting as attached in these guidelines.

SUBMISSION:

Two copies of the Hard Bound Thesis along with 2 soft Copies in Rewritable-DVD should be submitted to the Examination's Department, along with your contact details and number written at the front cover of the thesis. *Failure to do so will result in delays.*

In addition you must email the softcopy in MS Word format & PFD format to ThesisUoL+Summer2010@gmail.com with your name and project name in the subject line. All excel workings should also be included in the DVD-RW and also emailed as a separate file. After submission the Thesis all submissions will be the property of UoL.

LAST DATE FOR SUBMISSION:

This will be displayed on the notice board at the beginning of the semester. Failure to do so will result in you being considered as having failed in the thesis and you will enroll for the thesis again in the next semester after payment of prescribed repeat fee.

Note on Plagiarism / Copying:

Plagiarism Policy of UoL

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and students are responsible for educating themselves about it.

Plagiarism is a form of dishonesty that occurs when a person passes off someone else's work as his or her own. This can range from failing to cite an author for ideas incorporated into a student's paper to cutting and pasting paragraphs from different websites to handing in a paper downloaded from the internet. All are plagiarism.

There are three central things all UoL students should know about the consequences of plagiarism:

1) Plagiarism is a university offense. Professors are expected to report all instances of plagiarism to their respective department, which then initiates a review of its own. In other words, in addition to dealing with the course instructor, students who plagiarize must also deal with the University. Students

found guilty of plagiarism will have this entered into their record and may be expelled from the university.

2) Plagiarism in most instances is easy to identify and expose. The very force that makes plagiarism easy and tempting to some students--the internet--makes its detection easy. Most professors can locate the source of suspected plagiarism within a few minutes of searching the web. In this context, plagiarism is as much stupidity as it is dishonesty.

3) All parties to plagiarism are considered equally guilty. If you share your work with another student and he or she plagiarizes it, you are considered as guilty as the one who has plagiarized your work, since you enabled the plagiarism to take place. Under no circumstances should a student make his or her coursework available to another student unless the instructor gives explicit permission for this to happen.

In other words, students who plagiarize are likely to be caught, and the consequences will be severe and will include anyone who enabled the plagiarism to take place. University policy will kick in, regardless of the feelings of either the students or the instructor. Avoid plagiarism at all costs!

Note on Referencing

Referencing is a standardized method of acknowledging sources of information and ideas that you have used in your assignment in a way that uniquely identifies their source. Direct quotations, facts and figures, as well as ideas and theories, from both published and unpublished works must be referenced. There are many acceptable forms of referencing.

The official referencing style adopted by the Business School, UoL is the Harvard referencing style. Within the text of the assignment the author's name is given first, followed by the publication date. A reference list at the end of the assignment contains the full details of all the in-text citations.

Referencing is necessary to avoid plagiarism, to verify quotations, and to enable readers to follow-up and read more fully the cited author's arguments. For details of how to reference according to the Harvard Style please consult the following website: <http://libweb.anglia.ac.uk/referencing/harvard.htm>

Copying from other books, websites, documents, etc

In all of the thesis a maximum of only "*Quarter of a page*" data can be copied in totality from any one book, website or any one source; and this too is subject to

you giving its reference. If more than “Quarter of a page” is copied your thesis will be rejected.

Students are advised to check their work for plagiarism using at least 5 different internet based/program based plagiarism software. The work of all students is subject to an international plagiarism check, for which a fee of Rs 750 will be charged.

Arrangement of Thesis

1. Title page: (Sample A)
2. Signature Page: (Sample B)
3. Original Project Assignment Form
4. Acknowledgements page (optional)
5. Abstract (i.e. Executive Summary) page.
6. Table of Contents page (Sample C)
7. List of Tables / Figures (Optional)
8. Part 1- project objectives and overall research approach
9. Part 2- information gathering and accounting / business techniques
10. Part 3- results, analysis, conclusions and recommendations
11. References used (Sample D)
12. Appendices

Structure of Part 1, 2 & 3 of Thesis

PART 1 - Project objectives and overall research approach – 15% of your word count

The first part of your thesis 'sets the scene' It should include the following:

The reasons for choosing your project topic area and choosing the particular organization that was the focus of your research work

What you wanted to find out in your research work. i.e. your project objectives and research questions

An explanation of your overall research approach. This should provide the reader with an understanding of the overall framework that you developed to meet your project objectives and answer your research questions.

PART 2 - Information gathering and accounting / business techniques – 25% of your word limit.

The second part of your Research Report should provide more detail about:

- (i) the information that you have gathered and
- (ii) the accounting and business techniques you have chosen to apply to this information. It should include the following:
 - The sources of information from which you have obtained relevant data
 - A description of the methods used to collect information, including online access
 - A discussion of the limitations of your information gathering
 - Identification of any ethical issues that arose during your information gathering and how they were resolved
 - An explanation of the accounting and / or business techniques you have used, including a discussion of their limitations.

PART 3 - Results, analysis, conclusions and recommendations – 60% of your word limit.

The third part of your thesis should provide a detailed account of what you have found from the application of your chosen accounting and business techniques to the information that you have gathered. It should include:

- A description of the results you have obtained and any limitations
- Presentation of your results in an appropriate form e.g. tables, graphs, pie charts
- A critical analysis / evaluation of your results which includes an explanation of your significant findings
- Your conclusions about your research findings and how well you have met your project objectives and research questions
- If appropriate, recommendations on specific courses of action to identified individuals within your chosen organization.

4 Project Mentor

I. The role of the project mentor

If you wish to submit a Research Project (RP) to University of Lahore then you must have a Project Mentor. The Project Mentor has two different roles. The first which is focused on you is to support your preparation of your RP, by providing advice and feedback to you at appropriate times during your RP activities.

Secondly, the Project Mentor will confirm to the University of Lahore that he or she has been your Project Mentor and that your RP is your own work. Your Project Mentor will certify this on your RP submission form and the University of Lahore will check Mentor certifications.

You will have at least three meetings with your Project Mentor. These meetings provide your Project Mentor with the opportunity to guide your RP work and provide feedback to you. The meetings also provide you with the opportunity to develop your personal skills including questioning, listening and giving a presentation. You will reflect on this graduate skills development in your Skills and Learning Statement.

Your Project Mentor is not expected to have specialist knowledge within your project topic area or of academic research methods. Your Project Mentor does not play any part in the assessment of your RP beyond the certification

provided to the University of Lahore. You should not expect your Project Mentor to give you detailed advice on the structure and content of your Research Report or to write any of your RP for you. Those decisions and actions are solely your own responsibility.

However it will be very helpful for your Project Mentor to understand what is required of you to prepare your RP to the highest standard of which you are capable. You should provide your Project Mentor with as much information as you think useful about the University of Lahore Research Project and what is required of you.

Your Project Mentor should encourage you to think about what you propose to do in your RP work, challenge you to demonstrate that you are meeting your project objectives and that you will be able to meet your timetable for submission of your RP to the University of Lahore. Your Project Mentor may also ask you to demonstrate your understanding of the issues that have arisen during your research, and may wish to question you on your conclusions and recommendations.

II. Choosing your Project Mentor

It is your responsibility to find someone to act as your Project Mentor and to arrange at least three meetings with him or her. It is not possible for the University of Lahore to provide a Project Mentor for you but the University has identified three categories of individuals from which you should choose your Project Mentor.

The person you choose should be one of the following:

- Your tutor at College or University.
- A senior colleague at work e.g. your line manager.
- A member of ICAP/ICMAP/ACCA.

The University of Lahore has identified the following characteristics of an effective Project Mentor. You may wish to reflect on this list of attributes when making your own choice of Project Mentor.

- Is approachable and has genuine interest in helping student to succeed.
- Listens and actively questions.
- Respects confidentiality and is trustworthy.
- Acts as a sounding board to explore ideas and issues arising from research.
- Provides positive and constructive feedback on research being carried out.
- Challenges and discusses effective communication.
- Offers support and encouragement.
- Helps the student meet their objectives.

- Helps the student ask the right questions, to think systematically, to learn to apply appropriate evaluation techniques and to analyze and interpret the findings.
- Remains neutral and not judgmental.
- Provides subtle guidance but ensures student makes the decisions.
- Is knowledgeable and competent?
- Grasps the essence of the technicalities without becoming a subject matter expert.

5 Thesis Topic Areas

If you intend to submit a Research Project (RP), the University of Lahore strongly recommends that you should choose one of the following 32 approved project topic areas as the basis for your RP.

1. An organization's budgetary control system and its links with performance management and decision making.
2. How the introduction of a new technology can assist an organization in achieving its business objectives?
3. The impact of an aspect of impending legislation on the operations and financial position of an organization.
4. The impact of e-business on an organization.
5. The effects of globalization on an organization.
6. The key factors or indicators in the motivation of employees in an organization.
7. The restructuring of an organization's operational activities and the effect on the organization's financial performance.
8. The business and financial performance of an organization over a five year period.
9. The planning and implementation of an information system in an organization.
10. The effectiveness of the use of costing techniques within an organization.
11. The financial and operational costs and benefits of the internal audit / internal review activities within an organization.
12. The possible effects of a proposed accounting standard on the financial statements and business activities of an organization.
13. The relationship between an organization's human resources activities and its business objectives.
14. The business and financial objectives of a strategic investment decision made by an organization and its impact on key stakeholders.
15. The management of an organization's working capital over a five year period and its impact on the organization's funding strategies.
16. The financial and operational risk management within an organization.
17. The quality of the corporate governance within an organization and the impact on an organization's key stakeholders.
18. The marketing strategy of an organization and its effectiveness.
19. The financial and operational consequences of a merger between two organizations or of the acquisition of one organization by another.

20. An organization's corporate social responsibility policies, including business ethics, and their impact on business practice and key stakeholders.
21. Investigating the relationship between market values and accounting numbers for 30 selected Pakistani listed companies.
22. A critical study of the accounting impact of employee incentive schemes on a selected organization.
23. Risk management within financial institutions in Pakistan.
24. The effectiveness of the use of costing techniques within an organization.

25. The Relevance of Accounting Information for Valuation and Risk.
26. The due process of accounting standard setting in Pakistan.
27. The corporate treasury functions: risk management and performance measurement.
28. Environmental and social reporting and accounting in Pakistan.
29. Mortgage Finance and Islamic Banking.
30. Islamic banking in Pakistan.
31. Bank Mergers and Acquisitions in Pakistan.
32. How the management style and leadership characteristics of an entrepreneur affect the business success and failure?

Sample A: Title page

Here is an example of the text that should be appropriately centered and spaced on the title page:

(title of thesis)

A Thesis Presented

by

(first name, middle name, and last name of author)
(UoL Registration Number)

to

The Committee on Academic Degrees

in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for a degree
B.Com



(UoL logo here *without* Ayat.)

Business School,
The University of Lahore
(month and year)

Sample B: Signature Page

The Thesis committee for (Insert your full name) Certifies that this is the approved version of the following thesis:

Title of Thesis

APPROVED BY

SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:

Supervisor: _____
(Name typed under line)

(Name typed under line)

Form F:

**The University of Lahore
Lahore School of Accountancy and Finance
Mentor Certification Form**

Bachelor of Commerce (B.Com)

Project Deadline: _____

Student Name: **Father Name:**

Registration #:

Email: **Phone Number:**

Project Topic:

To be signed and Completed in full by Mentor:
Mentor Name:
Company/Organization:
Address:
Email Address:
Contact no.

Mentor's Certification:

Capacity for Acting as Mentor: (tick choice)	
• Your Tutor at College or University.	
• Senior Colleague at work.	
• A Member of ICAP/ICMAP/ACCA.	

I certify that to the best of my knowledge the project is the student's own work and that it has been carried out in accordance with the University's regulations. I further confirm that ----- meetings have been held with the student in accordance with the guidelines.

Signature..... Date.....

