

10 'Do or Dies' *Before* You Submit Your Thesis!

Your thesis is the fruit of many months or even years of intensive research and writing. Knowing you'll soon be submitting it to your university is a highly liberating feeling. But don't rush! Unidentified errors can cause this cornerstone document of your academic career to falter at the last hurdle. Only meticulous editing can clinch you a compelling and correct thesis that achieves maximum impact. Here we examine 10 ways to edit your thesis to perfection.

1. Optimum organisation

Look for logical flow & sensible sequencing

Structure, structure, structure! Your thesis *has* to tie together numerous ideas and persuade readers that your points are valid. So **checking your thesis is tightly organised is a must**. This is best done after you have taken a break so you come back to your work with a fresh pair of eyes. Start by ensuring you have logically divvied up information according to either your **specific university requirements** or **standard thesis structure**, which is:

- Abstract
- Introduction
- Context
- Research question
- Main body
- Methodology
- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusion
- Contribution summary
- References & appendices

This thesis structure is designed to help you group information and achieve a coherent flow. Yet it is key that you edit your work to make sure all mandatory sections are included—plus, of course, that your **research and ideas follow a logical flow**. Always edit your finished product against your original thesis outline—an absolute essential starting point for any successful thesis.

Checking thesis structure means looking at your work from a first-time reader's perspective. Are there any chunks of content that present awkwardly or out of place? Do your headings clearly prioritise and group your ideas? Are your subheadings correctly organised and complementing main headings without competing? Your reader should be able to glean a bird's-eye view of your thesis hypothesis, ideas and findings by skimming headings.

In a nutshell

If your information follows a logical sequence while your headings support and develop your thesis, you have achieved strong organisation.

2. Airtight arguments

Weed out inconsistencies & ensure arguments are built on strong stuff

Remember your thesis is all about the argument: clarity, strength and consistency. Your thesis is a complex document you will have worked on over many months or years. So there are lots of opportunities for subtle contradictions and inconsistencies to creep into your work undetected. The only trouble is, these can severely weaken your arguments and the overall flow of your thesis. So your review must weed out any details that have a negative or contradictory effect on the substance of your thesis. Again, these are much easier to spot when you've had some time away from your work.

Look out for weak arguments too. Anywhere you feel your arguments fall short of clarity and persuasiveness, you've still got some work to do. Your arguments are the entire impetus driving your thesis after all. You're trying to convince readers to share your point of view. Remember this underlying purpose as you review. Sound examples should back up each and every argument you present. Make sure you've chosen the strongest possible examples to substantiate your points. If you've come across additional arguments that pack more punch, or feel your standpoint is weakened by some of your examples—replace them!

In a nutshell

Be sure your argument is based on sound empirical evidence and articulated with authority. As you review your thesis, continually ask yourself whether you have fully substantiated your arguments. And whether these are ordered clearly and sensibly. If yes, you're on your way to presenting airtight arguments.

3. Finely tuned chapters

Go for strength & flow from beginning to end

Chapters are one of your greatest tools for achieving seamless flow throughout your thesis—not to mention ordering different ideas. Yet after many months working on numerous chapters, it is understandable that content may become disjointed. So chapter checking for structure, sequence and strength is a key part of your thesis editing. Essentially what you're checking for is paragraphs that are on topic and work together for overall thesis cohesion. Here are some key points to tick off:

- Every paragraph & new idea is clearly introduced.
- Thesis paragraphs are well balanced in terms of content & word count.
- Smooth transitions are made between ideas & paragraphs: polish any abrupt changes.
- Each chapter reaches a firm substantiated conclusion in support of your argument *distinct* from your chapter introduction.

In a nutshell

If you're confident that your thesis sports seamlessly blended and balanced chapters, your editing is doing its job.

4. Check for correctness

Little errors can cost you big! Strong cohesive information must be supported by word perfect content. So diligent editing involves checking all your thesis 'nuts and bolts' for accuracy. **Fact and format check all spelling, quotations, references, even often-forgotten tables and figures.** Remember, logical presentation applies as much to tables and figures as to content.

Missing information will result in missing substance *and* marks. So make a checklist of all reference essentials then check these are correctly included. Don't let missing page numbers, author initials or issue numbers weaken your thesis. Ensure all references within your thesis are correspondingly included in your reference list too.

In a nutshell

Have you thoroughly fact-, format- and information-checked all supporting and presentation material? If so, your thesis editing is achieving the right checks for correctness.

5. Get rid of repetition

Say it once because once is enough

Nothing weakens your thesis like repetition and redundancy. Every statement or argument you put forward should be strong enough to stand on its own. There should be no reason to repeat. It is common, though, when long hours are spent on a complex thesis, for repetition to creep in. So when editing, you need to strip out all gap fillers. That means ridding your work of any unnecessary quotations, references, points, and most likely, word count. So it pays to keep your draft thesis a little longer than the minimum word count.

In a nutshell

With no obsolete or duplicate information, you're headed towards a crisp, clear and clean thesis. Excellent!

6. Make for maximum impact

Contribute with creativity & substantiation

Effective thesis editing is about achieving top value from your work—and making it known. Always articulate the contribution your thesis makes to its field, focusing on key arguments and findings. Then be sure your work makes maximum contribution. And the key words here are 'your work'. The lifeblood of your thesis and its contribution is your *original* ideas. So use sourced quotations to support your argument. And balance these with word count dedicated to your unique ideas. Remember, if all your thesis does is re-present known facts, your contribution to your field is nullified. Your thesis might not be accepted if it does not make an original contribution. You need to draw your own conclusions as a result of your research.

Read aloud your ideas and particularly your conclusion to identify factual errors and flow bottlenecks.

In a nutshell

Ensure your thesis offers a strong contribution to its field by portraying original argument backed by empirical evidence. Do this and you're achieving maximum impact from your work.

7. Fresh is best

Update your thesis with up-to-the-minute research

Research and empirical evidence is like technology: constantly updating. So while you have been working long months (or years) on your thesis, new work has been completed in your field. The thesis editing stage is an ideal time to update your references with new additions, important works or publications. Your thesis will have maximum impact and contribution with *current* information.

In a nutshell

Keep your thesis at the front of the fray with up-to-the-minute empirical backing.

8. Become a compliance fiend

Compliance makes for excellence

University rules were made to be upheld so make sure your thesis does just this. Cross-reference your editing against any applicable rules such as word or page limits, referencing, formatting and more.

Deadlines are another form of compliance and your thesis supervisor will appreciate your dedication to time frames. Let your supervisor know when you intend to submit your thesis for their final read-through and approval. Would your supervisor like to see your thesis before or after editing? Leave the choice up to them. You could gain valuable feedback either way.

In a nutshell

A thesis that complies with university conventions and supervisor deadlines packs more punch. Become a compliance fiend while editing and you're on the fast-track to a high-quality finish.

9. Pristine presentation

Pack additional punch with presentation

Upon completion, your thesis looks more like a novel than a paper. Don't let your thesis editing falter at the last hurdle by paying insufficient attention to printing and binding. Get all your ducks in a row before your thesis hits the printer. Know crucial details like:

- Do you require single- or double-sided printing?
- Does your university recommend a specific printer or binder?
- Where should your thesis title appear (spine or front cover)?
- What printing or binding conventions must you satisfy?

Don't forget that printers and binders run a busy business. They can't necessarily jam your thesis through production to meet your deadline while juggling other important work. So book in advance and allocate time in your editing window to have printing and binding completed before thesis submission.

In a nutshell

Present your thesis according to university convention while allocating time for printing and binding upfront.

10. Take it to the experts

Thesis editing is about producing a fact-, format- and word-perfect document. That can be hard to achieve for someone who has worked so closely with the content! Professional editors can give your thesis genuine academic advantage through a fresh set of trained eyes. Blending objectivity with academic savvy, expert thesis editors will spot errors and flawed arguments more easily in your work than you can. Best yet, they will take the sweat out of ensuring your thesis is submission-ready. Elite Editing thesis editors will correct spelling, style and grammatical errors while tightening arguments and logical flow. Our service leaves you free to concentrate on formulating original ideas that make a significant contribution to your field.

In a nutshell

Professional academic editors take the sweat out of getting your thesis submission ready. Let us do the hard work for you!