

Guidelines for Academic Essays

Department of Audio and Visual Arts

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Guidelines for Academic Essays include basic rules common in all levels of academic writing (assignments, individual projects, undergraduate thesis, master's thesis and doctoral dissertations). It was conceived as a supplement for the undergraduate course Research Methodology therefore it is not a substitute for the supervisor.

Structure and documentation (citations to bibliography and references) are important issues such as the contents in the evaluation of academic essays. Equally important is the correct use of Greek or other language (orthography, concision and clearness), as well as the capacity to use the vocabulary specific to each course.

I. Presentation Format

The integrity of form, order, clarity and consistency in the application of presentation rules is, in many respects, evidence of the author's seriousness and the scientific nature of his / her work.

Writing

Text characteristics, irrespective of its subject:

- **page:** A4
- **characters per line:** 65-70
- **line spacing:** 1.5 lines
- **page margins:** 2,5 cm (top, bottom, left, right).
- **paragraph alignment:** justified
- **font:** Times or Times New Roman (size 12) optional in the body of the text and compulsory in the title page which should have the following structure:
 1. Department of Audio and Visual Arts, Ionian University (size 20)
 2. <Title of Essay> (size 18)
 3. <Name of Student> (size 16)
 4. <Name of Supervisor> (size 16)
 5. Corfu, <month, year> (size 14)

For other text features (titles, subtitles, images, etc.) the Student may follow the sample provided in the course "Research Methodology".

The essay and supporting documentation (software, pictures of installations / structures, etc.) are submitted in print and digital (CD, DVD), as a draft (e.g. word document, latex files) and in its final form (pdf, ps). The software developed is submitted in source code as an appendix.

Citing Sources

Concerning citations and bibliography for all types of sources, printed or digital, in any documentation system, notes-bibliography (footnotes or endnotes), author-date or numeric, the most important is consistency in the application of one citation style.

Images, Diagrams, Figures, Tables

They should be preferentially placed within the body of the text or at the end of the text, as an appendix. In any case caption is required including, first, number and, after, title. Compared to the body of the text, captions have a smaller font size. In-text citations include, first, title and, after, number within parentheses. Commonly, large academic essays include an index. Note that when using images or photographs the source should be referenced especially for copyright reasons.

Annexes

Complementary elements, printed or electronic (CD, DVD), can be attached to the essay as appendixes or delivered separately (software, installations, assemblages, etc.).

Length

The length of an essay is related to the cycle of studies which accordingly follow different regulations. A course assignment should have no more than 12 pages while a Personal Project should be limited to a maximum of 30 pages. For undergraduate and postgraduate studies consult the respective regulations. Success and failure to comply with word limits are taken in consideration during grading.

Oral presentations

In case the essay has to be presented publicly, the student may use digital means (i.e. PowerPoint or a similar program) and submit the presentation files to the Office of the Secretary of the department or to the Supervisor together with the written essay.

II. Structure

The structure of an essay is the product of a mutual understanding between student and supervisor. Generally, most essays have the

following:

Title

The title must be short and express with clarity the precise subject of the essay. The subtitle, if any, gives a deeper degree of specialization to the title of the essay.

Abstract

In this part the content of the essay is briefly described (approx. 100 words).

Summary

The content of the essay is described (one 100 words' paragraph per chapter) with emphasis on the results (approx. 500 words). It is written after the conclusion of all chapters of the text.

Table of Contents

It includes all the titles – subtitles, paragraphs, etc. of the chapters (from the introduction to the bibliography and the annexes) and the corresponding page numbers.

Introduction

The introduction is the first Chapter (CHAPTER 1: <title>) of the essay. It aims to introduce the main subject to the reader. It includes the following:

- **Subject**
The research topic.
- **Research/ Application Field**
Application field (course assignments and undergraduate thesis) or research field (postgraduate thesis and doctoral dissertations).
Description of the subject field, a critical analysis of similar works (included citation and bibliography), revealing the purpose of the research.
- **Aim**
The aim of the essay is described (with a critical analysis on the research / application field).
- **Definitions**
The definitions and explanations of the concepts on which the essay is based.
- **Methodology**
The methodology principles of the essay are described, mentioning which method, tools, case study/ies and experiments are used in every part. The general principles that will be developed in detail in the main part are described here. A brief reference to the rest of the chapters

can be made, in order to help the reader understand the argumentation of the essay.

Main Part (Development)

The development may include as many chapters as required in order to describe thoroughly the subject of the essay and the research stages. The problems that arise during the essay's development are analyzed in various parts. Every chapter focuses mainly on a point, a subject, a process, a complete argument, an experiment or a case study, etc. For example: (Analysis, Composition, Application, Documentation).

Conclusion / Results

The conclusion of the essay is an outcome of any results obtained in each chapter and includes an evaluation of whether the goals of the essay were reached.

Note: the results are one of the hardest sections when writing an essay, which as the Introduction, is commonly approached as an outline, but this is the role of the Summary. Instead this section is a 'reply' to the issues referred in the Introduction. Therefore, it is advisable to write it after the first draft.

Suggestions for further development

This is the last chapter of the essay, where an additional development-research is suggested, which will support the in depth completion of the essay's subject in the future. It is included only in cases where the main objective of the study has not been completed or when the results show that further research is required.

Bibliography

An internationally accepted bibliographic standard must be followed. The use of Chicago Manual of Style is suggested. This style sheet has many editions, among which the Chicago Manual of Style 15th B which is simple, distinct and handy and used in most of the MIT Press publications.

You can find the manual of style here:

<http://library.williams.edu/citing/styles/chicago2.php>
<http://www.calstatela.edu/library/guides/3chicago.pdf>

Essays related to technology follow either the Harvard Style or the Numeric System (more often). The citation style is a Supervisor's choice.

When citing an internet source, in case of a digitized print material (eg. journal, book, dictionary), print source rules of citation apply followed by URL and retrieved date. Commonly this type of source includes instructions for citations and references.

Annexes

Every annex (ANNEX A: <title>) includes the extensive documentation of the essay, such as code, video, pictures, experiment results, etc.

III. Characteristics of a Scientific Text

Brevity (concise expression)

Avoid redundant expressions-sentences. A simple way to distinct a redundant phrase is to question firstly whether this phrase provides a specific information and secondly if this information can be documented with comments, examples or an argumentation.

Clarity

The syntactical structure of the sentences must be as simple as possible. The sentences must be short. Avoid the subordinate clauses, if possible. Giving examples that specify and describe general suggestions or abstract concepts help the reader to understand them.

Precision

Avoid abstract expressions-phrases. Try using more specific terms.

Logical Argumentation

Every conclusion of the ESSAY is based on an argumentation that describes its structure and the logical process followed.

Adequate Documentation

The points presented in the text must be documented with bibliographic references or with examples and specific information. Every reference is made directly to each the referring point (mostly at the end of the sentence) and refers to the bibliography at the end of the ESSAY.

IV. Useful Websites

The following websites provide useful information about the writing of an academic essay. The list also includes websites concerning the development of Ph.D dissertations, because they provide general information considered useful for the writing of any scientific paper.

Academic Essays:

http://utopia.duth.gr/~soikonom/MANUAL_GIA_PTYXIAKH.pdf

<http://web.mit.edu/writing/index.html>

<http://libraries.mit.edu/tutorials/general/index.html>

<http://web.mit.edu/wac/writing/weblinks.html>

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/ResearchW/index.htm>

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<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/internet/owls/writing-labs.html>

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/545/01/>

<http://www.mhhe.com/mayfieldpub/tsw/home.htm>

www.ai.uga.edu/mc/howtowrite/howtowrite.pdf

<http://www.aresearchguide.com/1steps.html>

<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/thesis.html>

<http://www.charleslipson.com/How-to-write-a-thesis.htm>

<http://www.ma-dissertations.com/blog/writing-a-dissertation/how-to-write-a-thesis-statement-%E2%80%93-basic-things-that-you-need-to->

[know/432](#)

[http://www.ldeo.columbia.edu/~martins/sen sem/thesis org.html](http://www.ldeo.columbia.edu/~martins/sen_sem/thesis_org.html)

PhD Dissertations:

<http://www.phys.unsw.edu.au/~jw/thesis.html#outline>

<http://www.learnerassociates.net/dissthes/>

<http://www.amazon.com/Authoring-PhD-Thesis-Doctoral-Dissertation/dp/1403905843>

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Your-PHd-Thesis-Revise-Studymates/dp/1842850709>

<http://www.cs.toronto.edu/~sme/presentations/thesiswriting.pdf>

V. Bibliography

Strunk, William, E. B. White, and Maira Kalman. 2007. The elements of style. New York: Penguin Press.