

How to write a good introductory chapter

Doctoral Student Day

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Terminology

Swedish

Avhandling

Monografi

Sammanläggningsavhandling

Kappa eller ramberättelse

English

Thesis (dissertation)

Monograph

Compilation thesis

Introductory chapter
(Summarising chapter)
(Integrative chapter)
(Cover)

Thesis

The purpose of the thesis is to document the doctoral student's ability to autonomously apply scholarly methods to a research issue in a particular subject.

Source:

Regulations handbook for doctoral education (Third-cycle courses and study programmes) at Örebro University, p. 27

Introductory text

An introductory text is a text that integrates different parts into a summary thesis.

The summary thesis must be introduced and summarized in an introduction – often called a cover. The introductory text can also contain a reinforcement of e.g. choice of method or choice of theoretical frame of reference because the article format often does not allow discussions of this kind.

Thesis design

The doctoral thesis can be designed as either one coherent work (monograph) or as a compilation thesis based on scholarly papers.

If the thesis or a paper has been authored with another person, the individual contributions must be clearly distinguishable on examination.

Source:

Regulations handbook for doctoral education (Third-cycle courses and study programmes) at Örebro University, p. 28

Language

MH board:

The doctoral thesis should be written in English.

Source:

Regulations handbook for doctoral education (Third-cycle courses and study programmes) at Örebro University, p. 29

Quality review prior to the public defence of thesis I

MH board:

A final seminar should be held for all doctoral theses no later than three to six months before the predicted date of the public defence. An external reviewer should normally be engaged. (Internal reviewer may be used [MH]).

Shouldn't be completely finished but not too premature either

There must be time and space to take the reviewers' comments into account

HV differentiates between final seminar (coat + partial works) and cap seminar (only the coat) – the doctoral student chooses himself

Source:

Regulations handbook for doctoral education (Third-cycle courses and study programmes) at Örebro University, p. 29

Quality review prior to the public defence of thesis II

Only for compilation theses in medical science subjects:

As a complement to the final seminar, the papers in compilation theses in medical science subjects should undergo a special prior review by the members of the examining committee before the public defence.

The members are each asked to inform the university in writing by a given deadline if the doctoral student is advised against conducting the public defence of their thesis and, if so, the reasons for this. The doctoral student must be informed immediately of such a notification.

Source:

Regulations handbook for doctoral education (Third-cycle courses and study programmes) at

Örebro University, p. 29

List of publications

A list of the articles included in the thesis must be in the introductory text

The respective journal must be contacted before the defense for permission to publish the article and images/tables in the thesis according to the prepared template

Also applies to OA journals

Requirements

The thesis should include four articles where the doctoral student is the first author on three of these

At least two articles should usually be accepted or published in a journal with a peer review system

Central to the evaluation board's assessment is the doctoral student's effort and how the effort corresponds to the degree goals

Systematic overviews and meta-analyses/syntheses can be included in the thesis

An partial work should not be included in more than two theses

Source: "MV Guidelines for PhD education in medical sciences"

The purpose of the introductory text

Contextualization	framing, earlier knowledge
Summary	results as a whole, not only copy-paste
Elaboration	going deeper into some parts/aspects
Distancing	my contribution to global knowledge from afar
Reflection	what have I actually done?
Discussion	was it expected?, what surprised me? what can it be used for?

Outcomes for the degree of doctor

D5: demonstrate through a dissertation the ability to make a significant contribution to the formation of knowledge through his or her own research,

D9: demonstrate intellectual autonomy and disciplinary rectitude as well as the ability to make assessments of research ethics,

Source: Individual study plan

In short....

Ability to independent

- analysis
- integration
- reflection

Structure

- Abbreviations
- (Definitions)
- (Preface)
- Introduction/Background
 - Summary
- Aims
- Subjects/materials and methods
- Ethics
- Results
- Discussion
 - Methodological considerations
- Conclusions
 - Main findings
 - Scientific implications
 - Clinical implications
- Acknowledgements
- Sammanfattning på svenska
- ev. appendices

Preface/prologue

Establishes a context and provides a background to the story

A type of pretext that contains something that is of interest to what follows without being part of it

Source: Wikipedia

A personal story from the doctoral student as an "approach"

maximum 1-3 pages

Introduction/Background

Contextualization

Conceptual framework - concept

Theoretical starting points

Focused knowledge overview

academic text for non-specialists

State of knowledge in the field - "state-of-the-art"

Identified knowledge gaps

The rationale for the study

Aims

Overall purpose for the entire thesis

Aims from the partial works

should be similar

if there is a deviation, this must be justified

Hypotheses

Subjects/materials, methods, results

One partial work at a time or all at the same time? depends on the material

Summarize from the partial works

avoid cut and paste

New information?

unusual but not outright prohibited

there may be reason in some cases

Overview table, flow chart

Discussion

Relate the results to previous research

News value and originality

Interweave and integrate the results

Stand at a distance and peer - which figure appears?

Methodology discussion – motives, appropriateness, alternatives

Representativeness – generalizability

Strengths and limitations – central to demonstrating scientific maturity

Conclusions

Main findings

Research implications

Clinical implications

Summary in swedish

A few pages (max 5)

Broader target group

Important part of the thesis

more than an abstract,

less than the introductory part

Abstract in english

Very important part of the thesis

The nail blade - "spikblad"

Electronic announcement

Will immediately come up in DIVA

Remember

It's fun to write an introductory chapter

try to make it to an integrative chapter

Allow plenty of time for the chapter

The supervisors must approve the chapter

by and large – it should be your own product

Once in a lifetime