

## MSc project write-up guidelines

Font: 11 point Times New Roman or 12 point Times New Roman.

Spacing 1.5

Margins: Top and Bottom - between 2.2cm and 2.5 cm (anything between these is acceptable, but I would suggest 2.2, as this tends to look rather better).

Margins Left and Right: Left between 2.5 and 3.0 cm (this slightly wider margin enables binding to be carried out more easily. I'd suggest 2.5 as being a reasonable compromise).

Headers and Footers: between 1.3 and 1.5 cm

Page numbers at the bottom of the page in the centre. Use Times New Roman for the page number font and the same size font as the main text.

Style: This is up to the presenter. But I would suggest the following.

1. Justify the hand margin only (ie 'ragged right').
2. Chapter titles (if you present in chapter format, though this isn't essential - your decision) Centred, in upper case, bold.
3. Main headings Sentence case (ie first word initial capital) in bold, left justified.
4. Subheadings, sentence case, italics (not bold).
5. Numbering: Chapters have a number, 1, 2, 3 etc. Main headings follow chapter numbering 1.1, 1.2 etc. Subheadings have numbering as follows: 1.1.1, 1.1.2 etc.
6. Don't centre main headings or subheadings.
7. Don't put extra spaces between main headings / subheadings and text. This can lead to too much open space in the document.
8. Tables should have a title at the top of the table: Table 1: 'Table showing xyz...'  
Number tables sequentially.
9. Diagrams and figures should have a title at the top of the table: 'Fig. 1: Figure shows xyz...' Number figures sequentially.
10. If you copy or use someone else's figure or table, put the source at the bottom of the table.

11. References should be in the form of author(s) name and date in the text (Smith, 2005) or (Smith and Jones, 2007) and the full reference at the end in a reference list headed 'References' in alphabetical order (Harvard system should be used).
12. Don't use Footnotes.
13. There should be an Abstract at the front end of the project.
14. Include a page declaring that the work is your own work: I declare that the material presented in this project is the result of my own efforts, and that were material derived from other authors has been used, it has been acknowledged in the text of the document and listed in the references section'. This must be signed by you.
15. Title page: Title, centred, upper case, bold. Below this put: A project submitted in partial fulfilment of the MSc Biomedical Sciences (Online). Your name should appear below this statement.
16. Binding: Projects are normally bound, not in a book format, but with thick card outers, using spiral binding or similar. It doesn't have to look like a book. You will need to supply two copies.
17. Patients' names (if this applies) must be anonymised.

#### General:

Overall, numbering should be kept to a minimum. Too much numbering can break up the text too much, making it difficult to follow and read. Only number things that you feel need to be emphasised. Many people don't number subheadings, and this can give a better appearance, especially if there many subheadings, which some projects can have because of their very nature. It is better that the text flows, than one sticks rigidly to a formal numbering system just because it's a system that happens to be there. Readability is the most important factor here - getting the information over to the person doing the reading.

#### Word count:

This is 'set' at 7,500 words. But you should note that the word length is not a core item in terms of assessment. If you write something that's 7,000 words long, but is clearly a good project you would not loose marks because it's less than 7,500 words long. Similarly if it happens to be 8,000 words long, or even 9,000 words long. The word length is only a guide, because it can depend quite significantly on the content and type of project. Some projects may be on subjects where very little work has been done in the past. These tend to be shorter, as there's not much literature to discuss and relate to one's own findings. Other projects may be in well-researched area, where many people have published, so there is more to discuss. These tend to be rather longer, but that's a reflection of the project's nature.

In fact, many projects end up being rather longer, perhaps up to 10,000 words long, but again this is perfectly acceptable. It's the content that matters. I would suggest, however, that reports in excess of 12,000 words are probably too long for a project of this size. Formally, text in tables, figures, and references is not included in the word count.