Thesis: Structure & Organization
for Graduate Students
What are some common challenges experienced by writers of theses / dissertations?
What are some common challenges experienced by writers of theses/dissertations?

- Organizing the Thesis
- Managing the Thesis - Writing Process

Common responses from graduate students in prior presentations:

- unclear expectations
- overwhelmed
- methodology
- structure
- finding
- time to write
- getting started
- making steady progress
- making a plan
- competing input from committee members
- technical formatting
- getting feedback
- writers block
- setting up
- isolation stress
- fear of disappointing my advisor
- anxiety
- deadlines
This presentation will explore strategies for:

- Organizing the Thesis
- Managing the Thesis-Writing Process
Organizing the Thesis – Models

• Talk to your advisor / department

• Look in UofM Libraries’ MSpace
  http://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/index.jsp

• Check out Theses Canada
  https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/services/theses/Pages/search.aspx
Organizing the Thesis – Models: Look for . . .

• Structure / Organization
  • Chapters (order, length, content)
  • Headings, sections

• Scope
  • How have others chosen to limit their projects

• Secondary Sources
  • What kinds of sources? Within the field? Interdisciplinary?

• Scholarly context
  • How do others position their work within the broader scholarship?
  • How do they (effectively) show their engagement with the field?
    • what phrases signal participation in the scholarly conversation?
Organizing the Thesis

– Models: Look for . . .

• Structure / Organization
  • Chapters (order, length, content)
  • Headings, sections

• Scope

• Secondary Sources
  • Scholarly context

Search by field of research

Communities in MSpace

Select a community to browse its collections.

- Canadian Watershed Information Network (CEOS) [154]
- Engineering Datasets [6]
- Engineering Undergraduate Theses [41]
- Faculty of Graduate Studies (Electronic Theses and Dissertations) [23289]
- Faculty of Health Sciences [259]
- Manitoba Historical Pamphlet Collection [38]
- Research Publications from other Manitoba institutions [0]
- Research Publications from University of Manitoba Researchers [1316]
- University of Manitoba User Experience Assessment Data [5]
Organizing the Thesis
–
Models: Look for . . .

• Structure / Organization
• Chapters (order, length, content)
• Headings, sections

• Scope

• Secondary Sources
• Scholarly context

Search by field
Refine to search for an exact phrase

You can also choose “Add filters” to see additional search options, including an option to search by department.
Organizing the Thesis

Models: Look for...

- Structure / Organization
- Chapters (order, length, content)
- Headings, sections
- Scope
- Secondary Sources
- Scholarly context

Search by field of research
Limit search to theses and dissertations

Practices of community health nurses related to oral health advice given to caregivers of infants and children

This study examined the oral health knowledge of community health nurses in Manitoba and what oral health advice is given to the caregivers of infants and children. In addition, the differences in oral health knowledge of rural, northern and urban...

Community health assessment through an income-related health equity lens: a retrospective case study of three regional health authorities in Manitoba

Community Health Assessment (CHA) is a legislated process in Manitoba, Canada, which provides an overview of health in each Regional Health Authority (RHA). This process is important for operational and strategic planning, and provides...
Organizing the Thesis

– Models: Look for . . .

• Structure / Organization
  • Chapters (order, length, content)
  • Headings, sections

• Scope

• Secondary Sources
  • Scholarly context

Search by field of research
Refine to search for an exact phrase
Limit Search to theses and dissertations

Showing 10 out of a total of 479 results for community: Faculty of Graduate Studies (Electronic Theses and Dissertations). (0.006 seconds)

1 2 3 4 . . . 48 Next Page
Organizing the Thesis

– Models: Look for . . .

• Structure / Organization
  • Chapters (order, length, content)
  • Headings, sections

• Scope

• Secondary Sources
  • Scholarly context

Search by field
Refine to search for an exact phrase
Limit Search to theses and dissertations
Refine to search by topic/department and advisor

Showing 10 out of a total of 38 results for community: Faculty of Graduate Studies (Electronic Theses and Dissertations). (0.043 seconds)

Characteristics that determine complete physical examination rates in Manitobans with an intellectual or developmental disability: a retrospective cohort study

Ratnayake, Iresha (2017)

A population-based comparative study of health and health care utilization of Manitoba children in care with and without developmental disabilities

Heinrichs, Dustin (2015)

Hepatitis B vaccination coverage among foreign-born Canadians: data from the community health measures survey

Gunaratna, Hasantha (2018)
Refine to search by topic/department and advisor.

Most thesis and dissertation proposals include an introduction and a review of relevant studies on the topic. Most also include a formal or informal explanation of the methodology that will be used. In the social sciences, these three elements are typically presented as separate chapters. Notice the specific elements that are included in each chapter.
Notice how this thesis combines the introduction and lit review into a single chapter, which is common in some fields, especially in the physical and biological/medical sciences.
Notice the increased length of chapters in a doctoral dissertation.
Once you have reviewed a few sample theses, you might find it helpful to sketch out a draft table of contents, which you may want to discuss with your advisor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acknowledgements</th>
<th>........................................</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>........................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>........................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>........................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter I: Introduction</strong></td>
<td>(8 - 10 pages)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter II: Literature Review</strong></td>
<td>(25 - 35 pages)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>........................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>........................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter III: Methods (and Materials?)</strong></td>
<td>(10 - 40 pages)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Design</td>
<td>........................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sampling</td>
<td>........................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures of response</td>
<td>........................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>........................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter IV: Results</strong></td>
<td>(30 - 80 pages)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sampling</td>
<td>........................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>........................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter V: Discussion</strong></td>
<td>(10 - 30 pages)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effects of Treatments</td>
<td>........................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter VI: Conclusion</strong></td>
<td>(4 - 8 pages)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>........................................</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Self-Management & Writing: Making Progress!

Pause and think for a moment: What do you do

• to get started?
• to work through/past/around obstacles?
• to keep moving forward?
Common responses from graduate students in prior presentations

librarian
tutor
one
section
at
a
time
divide
the
work
coffee
writing
group
schedule
template
talk
to
peers
regular
routine
You might find it helpful to create a timeline with important dates and deadlines.

**Self-Management & Writing: Making Progress!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>Sept</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>Sept</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>Sept</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>U</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A – Course  
B – Student away  
C – Advisor away  
D – Conference CFP  
E – Conference  
F – Grant Application  
G – Literature review  
H – Thesis proposal  
I – Thesis defense  
J – REB submission  
K – Data collection  
L – Data analysis  
M – Results chapter  
N – Discussion chapter  
O – Figure preparation  
P – Chapter(s) to advisor  
Q – Revisions  
R – Thesis to committee  
S – Thesis defense  
T – Submission to FGS  
U – Convocation

Adapted from a timeline created by Dr. Dean Kriellaars, College of Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Manitoba
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Ad. source</th>
<th>Further info</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>ASEC5 – Kolb Trav. Fell</td>
<td>younger 18c scholars inc. &quot;adv. doc. cand.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;doc. cand.&quot;</td>
<td>TRAVEL</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>us/int TRAVEL</td>
<td>01.01</td>
<td>ASEC5</td>
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</tr>
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<td>ASEC5 – Williams Trav</td>
<td>18c English LIT. – documentary research</td>
<td>diss.</td>
<td>TRAVEL</td>
<td>$700</td>
<td>TRAVEL</td>
<td>01.01</td>
<td>ASEC5</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASEC5 – Popkin Travel</td>
<td>travel to collections</td>
<td>open</td>
<td>TRAVEL</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
<td>us/int TRAVEL</td>
<td>01.01</td>
<td>ASEC5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penn. Hist. &amp; Mus Comm &quot;Scholars in Residence&quot;</td>
<td>PA Historical &amp; Museum Commission mss. &amp; artifact collection</td>
<td>open</td>
<td>1 – 3 mo.</td>
<td>1,500/mo</td>
<td>Harrisburg, PA</td>
<td>01.16</td>
<td>OAH 29:4</td>
<td>phmc.state.pa.us</td>
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<tr>
<td>AAS: K&amp;H Peterson Fell.</td>
<td>strong AAS holdings</td>
<td>&quot;doc. cand.&quot;</td>
<td>1 - 3 mo.</td>
<td>1,000/mo</td>
<td>Worcester, MA</td>
<td>01.15</td>
<td>US #111</td>
<td><a href="mailto:csloat@mwa.org">csloat@mwa.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvard Atlantic World</td>
<td>short-term research for archival research</td>
<td>&quot;adv. doc.&quot;</td>
<td>unspec.</td>
<td>2000-2500</td>
<td>OPEN</td>
<td>01.15</td>
<td>AHA #?</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pdenault@fas.harvard.edu">pdenault@fas.harvard.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>AAS: Joyce Tracy Fell.</td>
<td>newspaper &amp; magazine as primary sources</td>
<td>&quot;doc. cand.&quot;</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>Worcester, MA</td>
<td>01.15</td>
<td>US #111</td>
<td><a href="mailto:csloat@mwa.org">csloat@mwa.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAS: Legacy Fell.</td>
<td>any AAS holdings</td>
<td>&quot;doc. cand.&quot;</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>Worcester, MA</td>
<td>01.15</td>
<td>US #111</td>
<td><a href="mailto:csloat@mwa.org">csloat@mwa.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Carter Brown Lib. &amp; Ci New Wild Comp</td>
<td>short-term Research Fell. Lib. holdings</td>
<td>exams by 1/15</td>
<td>2 - 4 mo.</td>
<td>1,400/mo</td>
<td>Providence, RI</td>
<td>01.15</td>
<td>JCBL 7/03</td>
<td>jcbl.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>U. of Michigan Library</td>
<td>research grants for UofM collections</td>
<td>1 wk +</td>
<td></td>
<td>500</td>
<td>Ann Arbor, MI</td>
<td>01.15</td>
<td>OAH 29:4</td>
<td>clements.umich.edu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Winterthur Museum</td>
<td>diss. and short-term fellowships (art/mat.)</td>
<td>&quot;doc. cand.&quot;</td>
<td>1 – 3 mo.</td>
<td>1,590/mo</td>
<td>Winterthur, DE</td>
<td>01.15</td>
<td>P 396</td>
<td>winterthur.org</td>
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<td>Yale U. Walpole Lib.</td>
<td>18c Brit prints, drawings, mss., bks. paintings</td>
<td>open</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>1,890/1</td>
<td>Farmington, CT</td>
<td>01.15</td>
<td>IRIS</td>
<td><a href="http://www.library.yale.edu/Walpole/fellowsh.htm">www.library.yale.edu/Walpole/fellowsh.htm</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>IHR Mellon Fell.</td>
<td>original sources - humanities, UK archives</td>
<td>PRE-DISS</td>
<td>≤ 2 mo.</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>01.17</td>
<td>email ihr.ac.uk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harvard Houghton Lib.</td>
<td>research on unique materials of Houghton</td>
<td>&quot;ABD grad&quot;</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>01.17</td>
<td>IRIS</td>
<td>bcil-harvard.edu/houghton/</td>
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<td>Newberry collections 1660-1815</td>
<td>&quot;doc. cand.&quot;</td>
<td>unspec.</td>
<td>1,200/mo</td>
<td>Chicago, IL</td>
<td>01.20</td>
<td>US #111</td>
<td>newberry.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newberry: Wolfenbüttel</td>
<td>use of both library collections -- for applicants of other Newberry fellows</td>
<td>&quot;doc. cand.&quot;</td>
<td>unspec.</td>
<td>2000DM/mo + travel</td>
<td>Wolfenbüttel, Germany</td>
<td>01.20</td>
<td>US #111</td>
<td>newberry.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newberry longterm (Spencer, Kade)</td>
<td>research in residence</td>
<td>6-11 mo</td>
<td>unspec.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chicago, IL</td>
<td>01.21</td>
<td>Pers. 40:1</td>
<td>newberry.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisvise Inst. (LPTS)</td>
<td>Am. relig. life, relig. institutions</td>
<td>cand.</td>
<td>12 mo.</td>
<td>18,900</td>
<td>anywhere</td>
<td>01.31</td>
<td>IRIS</td>
<td>louisville-institute.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>NYS State Arch: Hackman Arch</td>
<td>(at least in part) holdings of NY State Arch to-be-published understudied NY topic</td>
<td>open (inc. grad)</td>
<td>unspec.</td>
<td>100-4500</td>
<td>Albany, NY</td>
<td>01.31</td>
<td>US #111</td>
<td>nysarchives.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peabody Essex Museum</td>
<td>N. E. history &amp; culture</td>
<td>≤ 2 mo.</td>
<td>750/mo</td>
<td></td>
<td>Salem, MA</td>
<td>01.31</td>
<td>OAH 29:4</td>
<td>pem.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council for Euro. Studies</td>
<td>pre-Diss</td>
<td>PRE-DISS</td>
<td>2-3 mo.</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>02.01</td>
<td>email europa.net</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.E. Regional Research</td>
<td>use coll's of at least 3 NE insts. -2 wks ea.</td>
<td>8 wks</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>New England</td>
<td>02.01</td>
<td>Pers. 40:1</td>
<td>masshist.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>Haverford Coll. Gest Fell</td>
<td>ways of expressing religious belief</td>
<td>open</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>Haverford, PA</td>
<td>02.01</td>
<td>AHA</td>
<td>haverford.edu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IU Summer Pre-Diss Travel Grant</td>
<td>Pre-Diss. Travel Grant</td>
<td>PRE-DISS</td>
<td>TRAVEL 6-8 wks</td>
<td>1,000/mo + travel</td>
<td>intern TRAVEL</td>
<td>02.15</td>
<td>email C. Bankart - OIP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newberry Lib.: shortterm</td>
<td>Newberry collections</td>
<td>&quot;doc. cand.&quot;</td>
<td>1wk-2mo</td>
<td>1,200/mo</td>
<td>Chicago, IL</td>
<td>02.20</td>
<td>OAH 29:4</td>
<td>newberry.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS Lib. Resid. Res. Fel.</td>
<td>&quot;need to work in Society's collections&quot;</td>
<td>post-exams</td>
<td>1 - 3 mo.</td>
<td>2,000/mo</td>
<td>Philadelphia, PA</td>
<td>03.01</td>
<td>US #111</td>
<td>amplhsoc.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penn. short term diss.</td>
<td>&quot;research at the Lib. Co. &amp; Phil. region&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;diss. res.&quot;</td>
<td>9 mo.</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>Philadelphia, PA</td>
<td>03.01</td>
<td>US #111</td>
<td>librarycompany.org</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If your field has many funding options, such as archival research funding, you might find it helpful to create a table to keep track of fellowship requirements and applications deadlines.
Self-Management & Writing: Making Progress!

Gantt Chart allows you to track your progress toward multiple goals.
Self-Management & Writing: Making Progress!

- Write every day and do it at an established / fixed time
- Pair writing with something you enjoy
- Build rewards into your schedule
- Use small blocks of time
- Break down thesis writing into small, manageable tasks
- Create deadlines for each task, chunk, and section
- Develop a support group
- Park (your writing brain) “on the downhill slope”

“Parking on the downhill slope” means leaving yourself a plan for your next session before you quit writing. That can make it easier to get started during the next session, much like starting a car that is parked on the downhill side of a street.
Woodward’s role as both participant in and first historian of the religious societies and SRMs has perhaps led many English social and religious historians to accept Woodward’s explanations of the origins for both and to elide the two societies on occasion. The claim of primacy appears justified with respect to the SRMs, and even, at first glance, for the religious societies. A letter from Boston printed in A Help alludes to the “orders” for the religious societies, presumably those of Woodward’s Poplar parish, seemingly suggesting that the societies in Boston had copied their rules from those of the Poplar society:

Every day having heard and read some Accounts of the Religious Societies of Young Men in London, they were encouraged to endeavour the like among them. And beyond their Expectation (God working with them) prevailed with the greatest part of the Youth to form themselves into Societies for Religious Exercises, signing some good Rules to be observed by them therein, much like the Orders of the Societies of young Men in London.

Perhaps on account of this interpretation, English historians have tended assume that the religious societies and SRMs on both side of the Atlantic . . .
- Overton
- Simon
- Portus
- Bullock
- Curtis and Speck
- Walsh?

American religious historians, however,...
- antinomianism
- Lovelace
- vs- Levin

My argument . . .
Self-Management & Writing: Making Progress!

• Use “free writing”

• Create diagrams or other schematics

• Begin anywhere / Move to a new section

• Go back to your notes – look for insights that you have forgotten about

• Give up striving for perfection in your writing; remember, writing is a process.

• Take a break
Self-Management & Writing: Making Progress!

- Be organized from the start (as organized as you can be)
- Be systematic and consistent
- Be thorough - better to be safe than sorry
- Know the rules of your department, faculty, and the university
- Leave out paraphrases/data/images/figures/quotes if you can’t verify them or get permission to use them
- Ask! Ask! Ask!
Additional Campus Resources

• Your advisor and other faculty and students in your department

• Your department’s supplementary regulations (if any)

• Faculty of Graduate Studies Thesis Guidelines
  http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/graduate_studies/thesis/index.html

• Libraries, Reference Librarians and library subject guides
  http://libguides.lib.umanitoba.ca/

• Academic Learning Centre writing tutors https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/academic-supports/academic-learning

• Student Advocacy http://umanitoba.ca/student/advocacy/

• U of M Copyright Office http://umanitoba.ca/copyright/
Select Print and Electronic Resources


Proquest [U.S. theses and dissertations]:


*Theses Canada*: [https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/services/theses/Pages/search.aspx](https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/services/theses/Pages/search.aspx)

UofM Libraries' *MSpace*: [http://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/index.jsp](http://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/index.jsp)