

School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics Research Unit Guidelines

A 12-point Research Project is considered to be a coursework unit that which is taken over one semester and is 9000 words in length. Students who anticipate transferring to a research program are advised to write a minimum of 10,000 rather than 9,000 words.

Students should lodge an Application to Enrol form (available from the Administrative Officer, Sally Riley or from the web) and in discussion with the coordinator of their course and a possible supervisor, lodge this application well in advance of the start of the semester with Sally. Only after this application is approved is the student permitted to officially enrol in the unit. The coordinator will make recommendation to the School's postgraduate committee about the application.

In conjunction with their supervisor, students should determine whether their project requires Monash ethics approval, and if so, obtain approval before the commencement of the semester in which they will undertake the project. It is also necessary to send a report to the Ethics Committee upon completion of the project.

A supervisor guides the student's work during the semester. Individual supervisors will make their own arrangements with the student, but at least fortnightly meetings could be expected of around 30 minutes.

The project is to be submitted by the end of the semester, or at the very latest, the end of week 14. Adherence to this time frame is necessary so that the paper can be properly examined. A staff member, usually in the School, but other than the supervisor, undertakes the examination. The supervisor does not mark the paper, but has the right to request a second examiner if he/she feels the result is very different to what was expected. The Schools' Board of Examiners will then determine the final result.

The 9000-word length applies to the main body of the paper; and the bibliography/list of references and any optional appendix can be additional to this specification.

The Research Paper should contain the following elements:

- Title page with the title of the paper, your name and ID, year and supervisor's name.
- Contents page
- In some disciplines, sections should be numbered (e.g., 1.0., 1.1., 2.0 etc). and new sections (e.g., 2.0 for section 2) could be commenced on a new page. (In the case of a paper of this length, it is debateable whether the main sections should be called chapters, or just regarded as sections.)
- Those students in the applied Japanese linguistics stream should use the in-text referencing system, but students working in other disciplines may be required to use the footnote system of referencing. It is advisable to discuss this matter with your supervisor.
- Bibliography or List of References: for applied Japanese linguistics students, a list of references refers to the list of works placed at the end of your paper in alphabetical order which are referred to in the body of the paper. In contrast, a bibliography refers to all the works consulted by you in the process of writing. As these terms are used differently in different disciplines, students should consult with their supervisor regarding the most suitable term to use.

- Appendix (or Appendices): if it is necessary to include large amounts of data in your paper, you can add an Appendix, to which you can refer in the body of your paper. You can number them consecutively if more than one is used (e.g., Appendix 1, 2 etc.).

It is difficult to describe the contents of the project as this will vary with the discipline and topic. Applied Japanese Linguistics students will typically undertake an empirical investigation and the paper will thus take the form of a research report.

After introducing the general topic area, the writer will outline the research question(s), either in the form of a problem statement(s) or question(s) or hypothesis. This is to be followed by a justification and explanation of the significance of the topic. Some refer to the above stage or stages as the problem consciousness where the lucid statement of the aims of the research is provided.

The specification of the conceptual framework (sometimes also referred to as the theoretical framework, though at times these two concepts are differentiated) that will be employed in the paper also needs to be outlined. Generally, there will be a brief review of previous literature that is directly relevant to the study, either before, or after, or as part of, the segment introducing the conceptual framework.

In the methodology section to follow, students introduce (a) their sample, (b) instrumentation/data collection procedures (e.g., natural recordings, interviews, questionnaire survey etc), and (c) data analysis procedures (e.g., type of transcription, coding system, categorisation, type of statistics etc), where appropriate.

The following section of results or findings constitutes the main analytical section. Some writers incorporate discussion within this section while others prefer to have a discussion section to follow.

Needless to say, a strong conclusion where you bring together your main arguments is necessary. It is important that the conclusions relate directly to the research questions outlined at the beginning of the dissertation. Towards the end you may refer briefly to any weaknesses in your research investigation and it is also common for writers to contribute a few ideas about future research.

Technical or stylistic accuracy is essential throughout. Consequently, you should pay attention to the overall layout, numbering of tables and figures, pagination, margins, typographical perfection, spelling, appropriate citation style, headings, section/chapter numbering and so on.

Helen Marriott, updated 23/3/04