



**MONASH** University  
Arts

Tricks of the Trade  
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# “THE FLOW OF A THESIS”

# OVERVIEW

## **1. Background**

1. The nature of the MA or PhD
2. Choosing/refining a topic/research question

## **2. Structuring the dissertation**

1. General comments
2. “The flow of a thesis”

## **3. Project management**

## **4. The role of your supervisor**

## **5. What if things don't go well?**

# 1.1 The nature of the MA or PhD

- **A research project (designed, executed and written up by the candidate)**
- **A research training exercise (certification of capacity for advanced research)**
- **An exercise in writing (up to 110,000 words of deathless prose)**

## 1.2 Choosing/refining a topic/research question

- **Conceiving the project**
- **Honing your questions**
- **Developing your methodology**
- **Finding the right theoretical framework**
- **[Parallel process: beginning to write.]**

## 2.1 General Comments

- **Developing a chapter outline**
  - Many possible structures
  - Examine successful models for your discipline
- **Drafting abstracts/sections/chapters**
  - Start writing early
  - Don't worry that you may not use everything that you write

## 2.2 “The flow of a thesis” (one example)

### **1. The human problem**

1. Ends with programmatic paragraph

### **2. A disciplined problem**

1. Literature/discipline/explanatory framework

### **3. Methodology**

1. Operationalisation of disciplined question

### **4. Data summarisation and interpretation**

### **5. Conclusion**

## 3. Project Management

- 1. Development of a time-line**
- 2. Reaching milestones on time**
  1. Confirmation of candidature
  2. Mid-candidature review
  3. Submission
- 3. Writing and rewriting ... and rewriting.**

## 4. Role of your supervisor

### 1. Diagnosis and detection

1. Editing; correcting
2. General advice: structure, “flow”

### 2. Provision of *timely* feedback

1. Negotiation of effective procedure
2. Role of associate supervisors??

## 5. What if ...?

### 1. Where to seek help

1. Supervisor; Graduate co-ordinator; fellow candidates; writing resources; etc.

### 2. Language and Learning Services

### 3. Seek a wide range of feedback on your writing.

### 4. Write for publication; for conferences; for reading groups; etc. (GRiP)