

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING AN APPLIED RESEARCH THESIS

(Agribusiness Programme)

Phùng Thanh Bình (12/2024)

COVER PAGE

- **Design:** It can follow the template specified by the School of Economics or be created freely, ensuring a professional layout, readability, and alignment with the research content.
- **Content to Display on the Cover Page:**
 1. **Title of the report:** Undergraduate Thesis¹ (bold, large font, prominent).
 2. **Research Topic:** Clearly and accurately stated, concise yet fully meaningful (no more than 15 words).
 3. **Student Information:**
 - Full name of the student
 - Programme²
 - Cohort
 - Name and academic title/degree of the academic supervisor
 - Name of the internship organization
 4. **Time:** Clearly state the month and year of report submission (e.g., December 2024). Center it at the bottom of the page or place it anywhere as long as the cover page looks impressive.

¹ Also called 'Graduation Thesis'.

² Example: Agribusiness; Agribusiness – International Business; Agribusiness – Logistics and Supply Chain Management (no distinction needed between studying at the main campus or the Vinh Long campus).

- **Note:**
 - Do not number the cover page.
- The font, colors, and layout should maintain consistency and aesthetic appeal, avoiding excessive use of images or designs that could create visual clutter.
- The cover page must reflect the seriousness and professionalism of the thesis.

PAGE ONE

- **Title:**
 - **Acknowledgments** (bold, in an appropriate font size, and centered).
- **Text Content:**
 - Use lowercase letters, font size 13, and justified alignment.
 - The text should be concise and not exceed one page.
- **Formatting Guidelines:**
 - Number the page as *i*, positioned at the top or bottom of the page (centered or right-aligned).
 - Use a consistent font throughout the entire report (e.g., Times New Roman).
- **Suggested Content for Acknowledgments:**
 - Express gratitude to the academic supervisor, the internship organization, the internship mentor, family, friends, and faculty members who provided support during the studies and the enterprise semester/internship report.
 - Avoid excessive length or informal language

PAGE TWO

- **Title:**
 - **Declaration** (bold, in an appropriate font size, and centered).
- **Text Content:**
 - Use lowercase letters, font size 13, and justified alignment.
 - Ensure the text is concise and does not exceed one page.
- **Formatting Guidelines:**
 - Number the page as *ii*, positioned at the top or bottom of the page (centered or right-aligned).
 - Use a consistent font throughout the entire report (e.g., Times New Roman).

- **Suggested Content for Declaration:**

- State that the content of the thesis is your original work and has not been copied from any other source.
- Confirm that all information and data provided are authentic and properly cited.
- Clearly include the date (day/month/year), your name and signature.

PAGE THREE

- **Title:**

- **Summary** (bold, in an appropriate font size, and centered).

- **Text Content:**

- Use lowercase letters, font size 13, and justified alignment (aligned on both sides).
- Ensure the text is concise and does not exceed one page.

- **Suggested Content for Summay:**

- **Research topic:** Clearly state where the internship took place, the research topic, and the reason for choosing this topic.
- **Research objectives:** Present the main objectives of the thesis, including the general objective and specific objectives.
- **Research methods:** Summarize the research methods used, such as qualitative methods, quantitative methods, surveys, interviews, secondary data collection, etc.
- **Research results:** Highlight the key findings or outcomes of the thesis, focusing on the most significant points.
- **Key policy implications:** Provide specific recommendations or proposals for the business/organization based on the research results.

- **Keywords:** Directly below the "Thesis Abstract," list approximately five key, central keywords for the research topic.

- **Page Numbering:**

- Use page number *iii*, positioned at the bottom (centered or right-aligned).

- **Formatting Notes:**

- Present the content clearly and in a readable format without overusing words.
- Use professional language and avoid repeating content already included in other sections.
- Do not include citations.

PAGE FOUR

- **Title:**
 - **Table of Contents** (bold, in an appropriate font size, and centered).
- **Text Content:**
 - Use lowercase letters, font size 13, and left alignment.
 - List the sections in order, using numbering or symbols to clearly distinguish major sections and subsections.
- **Formating Guidelines:**
 - Try to list all the main sections on a single page, including chapter titles, sections, and necessary subsections.
 - If the table of contents exceeds one page, prioritize displaying the basic contents on this page and provide detailed content in the appendix (if necessary).
- **Page Numbering:**
 - Use page number *iv*, positioned at the bottom (centered or right-aligned).
 - Ensure consistency in font and formatting throughout the entire report.

PAGE FIVE

- **Title:**
 - **List of Tables and Figures** (bold, in an appropriate font size, and centered).
- **Text Content:**
 - Use lowercase letters, font size 13, and left alignment.
 - List the tables and figures in order, ensuring the correct titles as they appear in the report, along with the corresponding page numbers.
- **Formating Guidelines:**
 - Try to list all the tables and figures on a single page.
- **Page Numbering:**
 - Use page number *iv*, positioned at the bottom (centered or right-aligned).
 - Ensure consistency in font and formatting throughout the entire report.

NEXT PAGES

- **Content Structure:** This is the main part of the thesis, including chapters, sections, and content of the thesis. This part should be presented in a logical, scientific layout, adhering to the following formatting rules:

1. Chapter Title:

- Use uppercase letters, bold font, font size 20 (or an appropriate and consistent font size for the entire report), centered.
- Provide a brief title that reflects the main content of each chapter.

2. Main Section Titles:

- Use lowercase letters, bold font, font size 15, centered.
- Choose clear titles that reflect the main content of each section.
- The numbering for subsections should follow this format: 1.1, 1.2, ... 2.1, 2.2, 2.3,... 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, ... depending on the structure

3. Subsection Titles:

- Font size 13, bold font, left-aligned.
- Number subsections using the format: 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, ... depending on the structure.
- Avoid using excessively detailed titles like 1.1.1.1, 1.1.1.2, 3.2.1.1, 3.2.1.2, ...

4. Text Content:

- Use lowercase letters, font size 13, justified alignment.
- Line spacing: 1.5 lines for readability (or formatted for easy reading).
- Present content clearly, avoiding overuse of words, ensuring brevity and accuracy.
- Minimize the use of bullet points. Instead, present each idea as a separate paragraph. Balance the paragraphs, avoiding extremely long or short ones.

5. Tables, Figures, and Graphs

- Place the title above tables or below figures/graphs, and number them clearly (e.g., Table 1.1, Table 3.1, Table 3.2,...; Figure 1.1, Figure 2.1, Figure 2.2,...).
- Source of data (if applicable) must be cited correctly.
- The general rule is to provide clear and complete captions for Tables and Figures so that the reader can understand the content of Tables and Figures without referring to the text.

6. Citations/References:

- Use a consistent citation/referencing system (e.g., APA, Harvard, or as per specific guidelines). The APA citation system is recommended.
- Provide at least 30 references.

- Clearly specify the source of the materials used.

7. Page Numbering:

- Page numbering for the fifth page and subsequent pages of the report starts from 1, 2, 3,... until the last page of the main content of the thesis.
- Page numbers should be placed at the top-right corner of the page.

THE STRUCTURE OF EACH CHAPTER IN AN APPLIED RESEARCH THESIS CAN BE WRITTEN AS FOLLOWS:

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Introduction to the Internship

- **Reasons for Choosing the Internship Field:** Explain why you selected this particular industry or field for your internship. Highlight its relevance to your academic programme and its alignment with your personal interests.
- **Reasons for Choosing the Internship Company/Organization:** Outline the key criteria that influenced your choice of the company or organization, such as its reputation, scale, area of operations, learning opportunities, or potential career prospects. Emphasize the importance of gaining experience with this specific organization.
- **Overview of the Internship Position:** Provide a brief description of the role or department where you interned. Include details about the main tasks you undertook or will undertake. If applicable, introduce your internship mentor, including their role in supporting your tasks and assisting you in completing your internship and graduation thesis.
- **Expected Objectives of the Internship:** Detail the specific goals you aim to achieve during the internship, such as enhancing technical expertise, developing soft skills, and gaining hands-on experience. Note that these objectives differ from the research goals outlined later and will be linked to the overall conclusions presented in the thesis (concluding Chapter 5).

1.2 Research Topic/Problem Statement

- **Identify the Issues Faced by the Company/Organization:** Clearly describe the specific challenges, difficulties, or needs that the company or organization is currently encountering or seeking to address.

- **Define the Research Problem:** Provide a detailed explanation of why this particular issue was chosen for research. Emphasize the importance and potential benefits of your research or analysis in addressing and resolving the identified problem for the company or organization.
- **Note:** Use credible data and reliable statements to support your points, avoiding unsupported claims. Ensure all data and statements are appropriately sourced and cited.

1.3 Research Objectives

- **General Objective:** Present a broad, overarching goal that encompasses the entire scope of the research.
- **Specific Objectives:**
 - Break down the general objective into detailed and specific objectives.
 - Around 3–4 Specific Objectives, for example:
 - Analyze the root causes of the company's problem.
 - Evaluate the impact of the issue on business operations.
 - Propose solutions to improve operational efficiency.

1.4 Scope of the Study: Subjects, Space, and Time

- **Research Subjects:** Clearly describe the subjects targeted by the study (e.g., customers, products, internal processes, markets, etc.).
- **Spatial Scope:** Define the area, department, or geographical location covered by the research.
- **Time Scope:** Set the time frame for the research (e.g., from month A to month B).

1.5 Research methods

- **Data Collection:** Describe the methods used to gather data, such as surveys, interviews, or document analysis.
- **Data Analysis:** Introduce the tools or techniques employed for analyzing the data (e.g., statistical methods, modeling, or analytical software like R, Stata, SmartPLS).
- **Implementation Process:** Outline the key steps involved in conducting the research.

1.6 Overview of the Thesis Structure

- Provide a brief introduction to the layout of the thesis, including the main chapters and the content presented in each chapter.
- Example:
 - **Chapter 1:** Introduction.
 - **Chapter 2:** Theoretical Framework.

- **Chapter 3:** Research Methods.
- **Chapter 4:** Research Findings and Discussion.
- **Chapter 5:** Recommendations and Conclusion.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Key Concepts

- **Purpose:** Provide clear definitions of the key concepts that will be used in your thesis. These concepts help define the scope of your research and establish a solid theoretical foundation for the thesis.
- **Writing Guidelines:**
 - Define in detail the concepts directly related to your research topic, avoiding the use of jargon that might be confusing.
 - Each concept should be explained briefly, clearly, and in a way that connects to the company's/organization's issues or the research problem.
 - It is crucial to include proper scientific citations, with as many references as possible.
 - To write this section effectively (as well as the theoretical framework), you should review scientific articles relevant to your research topic.

2.2 Overview of Theories Related to the Research Topic

- **Purpose:** Present and explain the key theories that support your research, especially those that can be directly applied to business/organizational practices.
- **Writing Guidelines:**
 - Select the most relevant theories to explain the factors affecting the operations of the company/organization within your research area.
 - Provide an overview of these theories and their applications in the business/organizational environment.
 - Theories can be presented through diagrams, such as food supply chain models, agricultural inclusive value chain, theory of planned behavior (TPB), protection motivation theory (PMT), or theoretical models like production functions, random utility models (RUM), trade gravity model, etc.
 - To write this section effectively, you should review scientific articles relevant to your research topic.

- It is essential to include proper scientific citations, with as many references as possible.
- If using functions or equations, be sure to number them sequentially throughout the thesis.

2.3 Overview of Relevant Research Related to the Research Topic

- **Purpose:** Summarize previous research related to your research topic, highlighting the gaps in the current literature and demonstrating the necessity of your study.
- **Writing Guidelines:**
 - Categorize the relevant studies into two main groups::
 - **International Research:** Present studies and articles from international scholars and experts that relate to the research problem, especially applied research in business/organizational contexts.
 - **Domestic Research:** Present studies conducted locally, particularly those with practical applications for businesses/organizations in Vietnam.
 - Explain how these studies might influence the company/organization and the issue you are researching.
 - If there are many references related to the research topic, you can create a summary table with columns such as: Author, Source, Research Method, Key Findings, etc.
 - Avoid presenting the research in a list format (even including the full title of each study).
 - To write this section effectively, you should review scientific articles relevant to your research topic.
 - It is crucial to include proper scientific citations, with as many references as possible.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Introduction to the Company/Organization

- **Provide basic information about the company/organization**, including its history, development process, area of operation, mission, vision, and core values.
- **Describe the organizational structure**, the functions of departments, and the current workforce situation. It is recommended to create your own organizational chart (using

tools like Gitmind, draw.io, etc.) instead of copying directly from the company/organization's website.

- **Introduce the products and services** offered by the company/organization.
- **Analyze the customers and market** served by the company/organization.
- **Identify the main competitors** of the company/organization.
- Students may use the **Business Canvas model** to describe the business model of the company/organization.
- **Summarize the business performance** of the company/organization in the past 2-3 years, including financial indicators such as revenue, costs, profits, capital sources, etc. This should include analysis and comparison, as these data will be useful for analyzing the company's/organization's situation.
- **Provide any additional relevant information** to support the specific content of the thesis.

3.2 Situation Analysis

- **Analyze the context and background of the research problem**, including synthesizing information from various sources.
- **Identify factors related to the research problem** using diverse analytical methods, including:
 - **External factors analysis** (macro, economic, political environment).
 - **Internal factors analysis** (within the company/organization, processes, resources).
 - **Technology factors analysis** (innovation, technology application).
 - **Market analysis and consumer behavior trends** that impact the company/organization.
 - **Competitive analysis** (using models like Porter's Five Forces).
- **Use analytical tools** such as SWOT to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

3.3 Research Methodology

- **List the research methods** that will be used to address the problem analyzed in the previous section.
- **Explain the rationale for selecting these research methods** and their relevance to previous studies.

- **Describe the research methods** (qualitative such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, case studies, observations; or quantitative such as descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, causal analysis/regression, comparison/experimentation).
- If the research is quantitative, **present the econometric/statistical model in detail**, describing the variables in the model and how these variables will be measured.
- **Outline the sampling and data collection methods** (e.g., random sampling, convenience sampling, purposive sampling), depending on whether the research is quantitative or qualitative.
- **Describe the data processing methods** (using statistical analysis software, content analysis, coding data, etc.), based on whether the research is quantitative or qualitative.
- If there are any formulas or equations used, **number them consecutively throughout the thesis**.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH RESULTS

This section presents the results obtained from applying the research methods described in Chapter 3. The presentation of research findings will depend on whether you have used **qualitative or quantitative methods**.

If you are applying **qualitative research methods**, this chapter should be organized according to the research objectives (or research questions) or key themes to present the main findings. A suggested structure could be as follows (for example, if your research has 3 main objectives or themes):

4.1 Topic/Theme 1: [Title]

4.1.1 Description of the Topic: Provide a brief overview of the topic, its purpose, and significance within the research context. This topic may address a critical factor or issue that the research aims to solve. Explain why this topic is relevant and how it ties into the broader research objectives.

4.1.2 Illustrative Quotes: Provide quotes from in-depth interviews, summarized results from focus group discussions, or case studies to illustrate the key ideas and findings from the research. These quotes help clarify various aspects of the topic and provide concrete evidence from the data collected. Sometimes, you may need to use boxes to present verbatim quotes from interviews or case studies.

4.1.3 Analysis and Explanation: Explain how this result answers the research question or contributes to the research objectives. Offer a detailed analysis of the meaning behind the

findings and how they relate to the theory or previous studies. Discuss any patterns, contradictions, or unexpected insights revealed by the data.

4.2 Topic/Theme 2: [Title]

4.2.1 Description of the Topic: ...

4.2.2 Illustrative Quotes: ...

4.2.3 Analysis and Explanation: ...

4.3 Topic/Theme 3: [Title]

4.3.1 Description of the Topic: ...

4.3.2 Illustrative Quotes: ...

4.3.3 Analysis and Explanation: ...

4.4 General Discussion

- **Summary of Key Findings:** Summarize the main results from the topics analyzed in the previous sections. Highlight the most significant discoveries and their relevance to the research question.
- **Linking Results to Research Objectives:** Connect the findings to the overall research objectives and discuss their implications within both practical and theoretical contexts. Explain how the results provide insights into the problem being studied and how they contribute to existing knowledge in the field.
- **Comparison with Previous Studies:** Compare the results of this research with previous studies in the field. Highlight any differences or similarities in findings and discuss what new contributions this study offers to the academic or practical understanding of the topic. This is a critical part of validating the relevance and originality of your research.

If you apply a quantitative research method, the results chapter will be organized according to the traditional structure as follows:

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

- Present descriptive statistics for the research sample, key variables, and characteristics of the collected data.
- It is recommended to present tables or charts.
- You can also use statistical tests such as t-tests (for comparing two groups), ANOVA (for comparing multiple groups), etc.

- If your research uses time series data, there are specific tests for stationarity, such as autocorrelation plots, ADF tests, etc.

4.2 Model Estimation Results

- Provide the results of the model estimation (e.g., regression coefficients, standard errors, p-values, test statistics, etc.).
- You may present more than one model to compare the results.
- You should create the tables clearly and professionally, without copying and pasting directly from statistical software

4.3 Interpretation of Results

- Explain the significance of the model results, how they answer the research questions, and contribute to the research objectives.

4.4 General Discussion

- Summarize the key findings and discuss their significance. Compare them with theories and previous research, as well as practical applications of the research findings.

CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Recommendations/Solutions

- **Planned Actions for the Future:** Propose specific strategies and action plans to achieve future research objectives, including the application of research findings in practice and the development of solutions based on proven discoveries.
- **Recommendations for the Business/Organization:**
Provide specific recommendations and solutions for the business/organization based on the research results, helping to improve operations, processes, or development strategies.
- **Highlight the Creative Aspects of Your Proposal:**
Analyze the creative or innovative elements of your proposal. Provide reasons and justifications for developing those solutions or action plans, based on research, collected data, and theoretical models.
- **Time and Action Plan, Cost Estimates for Your Proposals:**
Identify the specific steps for implementation, along with the estimated timeline and costs to carry out the proposed solutions, in line with the business/organization's

resources. Develop short-term and long-term plans for the implementation of these proposals.

- **Implementation Issues – Key Considerations for Successful Execution:**

Provide key points and factors that the business/organization needs to consider when implementing the solutions or proposals. Identify factors that could affect the success of the implementation, including resource management, support from relevant departments, and external factors.

- **What Will Happen After the Proposal/Project is Implemented:**

Predict the outcomes and impacts after implementing the solutions or projects. Highlight concerns and preparations that the business/organization should focus on to ensure success and sustain long-term results.

5.2 Conclusion

- **Summary of Results and Proposals:**

Summarize the main research results and proposals. Link these results with the applied research methods and assess how these methods met the research objectives. Evaluate the strengths of the research methodology and areas for improvement.

- **Key Learnings and Aspects Gained from the Internship:**

Present the important lessons learned from the research and internship process, along with the knowledge and skills gained. Point out areas you want to further develop in your future career.

- **Context of the Study with Situation Analysis:**

Provide an analysis of the context and practical situation when conducting the research, including factors influencing the research results and challenges encountered during the process.

The final part of the thesis typically includes references and appendices. Page numbers are usually assigned in Roman numerals for the introduction section, e.g., iv, v, vii, etc.

References

The reference list in the thesis, following the APA format, should be organized alphabetically and include only the sources that have been cited in the content of the research. Below is how references should be presented and how to number pages according to APA format:

Presentation of References:

1. Books:

- **Structure:** Author. (Year). *Title of the book* (Edition, if applicable). Publisher.
- **Example:**
 - Smith, J. (2020). *Marketing fundamentals* (3rd ed.). Pearson Education.

2. Academic Articles:

- **Structure:** Author. (Year). Title of the article. *Journal Name*, Volume(Issue), page range.
- **Example:**
 - Johnson, L. M., & Brown, P. R. (2018). The impact of social media on marketing strategies. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 45(2), 123-135.

3. Articles from Websites:

- **Structure:** Author. (Year, Month Day). Title of the article. *Website Name*. URL
- **Example:**
 - Miller, A. (2021, March 10). What is the short food supply chain. *Agribusiness Daily*. <https://www.agribusinessdaily.com/what-is-the-short-food-supply-chain>.

4. Chapters in Edited Books:

- **Structure:** Author of the chapter. (Year). Title of the chapter. In Editor(s) (Ed.), *Title of the book* (pp. page range). Publisher.
- **Example:**
 - Anderson, C. A. (2017). Digital transformation in business. In P. R. Thompson (Ed.), *The future of digital marketing* (pp. 45-67). Oxford University Press.

5. Online References Without an Author:

- **Structure:** Title of the document. (Year). *Website Name*. URL
- **Example:**

- *Digital marketing trends in 2024.* (2024). *Marketing Insights*.
<https://www.marketinginsights.com/digital-trends-2024>

Page Numbering in References:

- **Books:** No page numbers are needed in the reference list unless citing a specific chapter or section of a book.
- **Academic Articles:** The page range of the article, from start to end page, must be included.
- **Web References:** No page numbers are needed; only the URL should be provided.

Notes:

- References should be listed alphabetically by the author's last name.
- **Line spacing:** The references should be formatted with double spacing and no extra space between entries.
- **Hanging indent:** The reference list should use hanging indent formatting, meaning each reference's description should be indented by 0.5 inch (1.27 cm) after the first line.

If you have any specific references in your list and need help formatting them in APA style, feel free to provide them and I can assist in organizing them.

Appendix

The appendix in a thesis typically includes supporting materials for the main content of the research, helping the reader better understand the data, information, and research methods you have used. The appendix may contain questionnaires, tables, images, charts, detailed results from surveys or interviews, and other reference materials that could not be included in the main body of the thesis.

1. Naming the Appendices::

- If there are multiple appendices, you can number them in order, such as Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C, etc.
- Questionnaires or similar materials may be placed in Appendix A and named "Questionnaire" or "Interview Question List," depending on the content.

2. Questionnaires:

- If your research involves data collection through surveys or interviews, the full questionnaire will be listed in the appendix. You can present them according to each research objective or group of questions.
- Ensure that the questions are clearly stated, easy to understand, and include all response options (if applicable).

3. Other Sections in the Appendix:

- Tables, charts, and images (if applicable).
- Supplementary materials, such as detailed survey results, analysis tables, or interview response codes.