

# Thesis Template: A Quick Guide.

## Prologue

Firstly, congratulations on reaching the writing-up stage. Back up all your experimental files somewhere safe (such as an external hard drive, DVD or USB stick that won't go up in flames with your laptop) and get to organising.

Word is a fussy thing and it took me a fair while to organise things within it – such as page numbers, headers/footers, arranging graphs etc. -- before I got my Thesis done. I got mine done in seven weeks, albeit with a published review and research article to include. Mine was for Queen Mary, University of London before the group moved (I was the last); these templates are modified for the University of Southampton standard to save you the pain.

Good luck, stay sane and all the best in whatever you do next!

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## General Rules for Thesis Writing

I made this template as I want to help make it easier to write the Thesis by putting Word in its place. Here are some other hints:

- **Work on it one chapter at a time.** This may seem obvious, but it also means you only need to send Steve the chapter you want him to check, rather than the heavy bloated behemoth the Thesis will become.
- **Figure out what you are going to say, then illustrate it afterwards.** The text is more important than the graphics. Don't run out of time to describe things because the graphics you spent a month working on are too busy winning awards. Besides, the narrative will change as you develop your arguments or add new papers.
- **Figure out how you are going to do your references and keep consistent.** If you're using Word's footnotes, make sure you don't miss one at the end. If you're using Mendeley, check that its output format is correct. If you use Endnote – as I did – save then *disable the plug-in (File>Options>Add-ins>Go...)* before you copy or paste ANY sections of text from one place to another. Re-enable it to rebuild the bibliographies afterwards.
- **Are you going to have Bibliographies and Experimentals in *each* chapter or as an overall *separate* chapter?**
- **Save hard, save often and in two different places.** Seriously.
- **Don't eat coffee beans.** Don't ask. Seriously.
- **Ask for opinions if you're stuck.** Often someone else's viewpoint from the outside can help you see around a problem.
- **If you're still stuck, walk to the nearest café, park, pub or whatever to take your mind off it.** Apparently, caffeine helps repeat tasks (such as checking NMR assignments) and alcohol – if you're so inclined – helps creativity (so as long as it doesn't affect your motor function).
- **Remember to sleep.** You need that brain working to form the ~50,000 words that you need to drop in the correct order. Treat it well.

## The Template

The Template is set up with the following files:

- **Soton Thesis.dotx**

A Word Template file to paste your final chapters into to produce your finished Thesis.

- **Soton Thesis Preview.docx**

A Document that preloads the introductory stuff (title, ToC, acknowledgements etc.) and Chapters 1-4 in the Chapters folder to give you a preview of your Thesis and export a PDF for printing without bothering to copy and paste.

Go to “View > Outline > Show Subdocuments > Expand Subdocuments”, then Close Outline View (big red X) to preview your Thesis without any manual copying and pasting.

*NB: This file **depends** on the files in the “Chapters” folder and moving it will **not** include your Thesis contents unless you move the Chapters folder too.*

*Expert tip: Go to “View > Outline > Show Subdocuments > Expand Subdocuments” as before, then click inside each grey box then press “Unlink” in turn (each contains text and is a Subdocument) to copy the content across to this file. Save it under a new name and you’ve got your complete Thesis in a single file!*

- **Chapters Folder**

This folder contains five Word documents files:

- Chapter [1-4].docx as example chapters for the Thesis Preview file above;
- Initial Material.docx, which contains the Title, Abstract, Declaration of Authorship, Table of Contents, Acknowledgements, Abbreviations and Definitions.

It also contains four folders (Chapter [1-4] Drafts) for keeping your draft versions in place, with their images, spectra etc. as you wish.

- **Colour Templates**

This folder contains a selection of Word Templates. The colours refer to the coloured bars on the front page box, headers and footers of each chapter, so you can choose the one you want to use for each chapter.

Intro.dotx is for Chapter 1 and has gold headers and footers.

Blank.dotx is just that: a blank template for blanking out a Chapter you do not intend to use (my Thesis, for example, had only three).

*NB: The intention behind the colours is not to pick a single colour and stick to it, but to have a separate colour for each section. As such, make sure two similar colours do not label consecutive chapters. The example provided uses Gold, Purple, Dark Red then Light Blue in order, to keep Purple and Light Blue apart.*

*Expert tip: Changing the colours is as simple as editing them, but if you do so, take care to change **all** the Headers and Footers (Odd/Even/First Pages).*

## Using the Template

To use the template, complete the Initial Material.docx file, then your Chapters 1-4.docx before copying the contents to the Soton Thesis.docx file.

*Do not modify any styles at this stage.* All these files are set up to use the same styles so that they remain self-consistent. If you wish to make changes, do so once you have the entire Thesis together in a single file so that you can change each style once in a big file, rather than five times in each little one (it's very easy to forget one!).

### 1) Initial Material

This contains the obligatory pre-amble but is already customised to Southampton requirements. I have omitted the Table of Figures as I was advised to from my thesis.

1. Go to File and alter the Title and "Your Full Name" to your title and name. This will be automatically updated in the document.
2. Add the Month and Year of submission to the front page.
3. Leave the notes on the Abstract for now... you'll likely complete the abstract last and need to remember the spacing requirements. Also leave the Table of Contents and your Acknowledgements for the end.
4. Update your abbreviations and definitions list as you go, then you won't need to skim the *entire* document for abbreviations later!

### 2) Chapter 1

This contains your introduction. Edit Chapter 1.docx in the Chapters folder. If you delete it by mistake, use Intro.dotx in Colour Templates to regenerate it.

**Do not change the file name;** if you work on a draft, copy Chapter 1.docx to the Draft folder and edit it there. Copy it back so the original folder – renaming it "Chapter 1.docx" – when you want to preview your thesis.

**Decide whether you are using a Bibliography in each section or a large one at the end.** If you are using bibliography software, make sure you know how it will behave (In EndNote's case, you can edit the Style to allow for a bibliography per section).

**Use Word's in-built system for captioning Tables, Schemes and Figures.** This way, the numbers should automatically update and you can use Cross-Referencing in Word to have automatically-updating links to a specific Table/Scheme/Figure.

### 3) Chapters 2-4

These contain your Results and Discussion chapters, any Appendices and, if you are including them, overall Experimental and Bibliography sections.

**First, pick a colour for your chapter.** Choose a Colour Template for your chapter by opening it and then *saving over* Chapter [2-4].docx before you begin typing.

**See the above notes on file name and captioning.**

**Decide whether you are using an Experimental section in each Chapter or a single Experimental Chapter.** The Experimental Headings in the Styles list are designed to *not* appear in the Table of Contents; perfect for using an Experimental per Chapter but use the standard headings if you are using a single Experimental Chapter and want each compound preparation to appear in the ToC.

**You might not need all of these Chapters.** If so, use “Blank.dotx” and overwrite the Chapter N.docx file you wish to blank out with it.

**You might need additional Chapters.** If so, use more Colour Templates and save Chapters 5 and onwards. *Chapters 5 onwards will not show in the preview*, so if this happens, contact me to create a new preview or follow the Expert Tip below.

*Expert tip: In Soton Thesis Preview.docx Go to “View > Outline > Show Subdocuments > Expand Subdocuments” as before. Highlight where your new chapter is to go, then click “Insert” next to the “Expand Subdocuments” button. Select your newly-created “Chapter 5.docx” and then save; from hereon Chapter 5 will appear in your Soton Thesis Preview file. If you have a Chapter 6, etc., “Insert” them as above, one by one, then save and all will appear in your Preview file.*

#### 4) Putting It All Together

**Simple Method: “Copy and Paste”.** *Disable any Bibliography software plugins before you begin.*

- 1) Open “Soton Thesis.dotx”. It will appear as “Document1”.
- 2) Open “Initial Material.docx”, press Ctrl+A to select everything and Ctrl+C to copy.
- 3) Then, in “Document1”, highlight the <<Initial Material>> label then press Ctrl+V to paste it in.
- 4) Open “Chapter 1.docx” and use Ctrl+A; Ctrl+C as before, pasting what you copy over the placeholder label in “Document1”.
- 5) Repeat for any remaining chapters.
- 6) **Save it now.**
- 7) Re-enable your bibliography software, if applicable and update your Bibliography if necessary. Make sure you have it set to per-chapter or single Bibliography as required beforehand! This can be a bit nightmarish and prone to crashing, hence the previous Save.
- 8) Update your Acknowledgements and Abstract, then Right-Click on your Table of Contents and Update Field to generate the ToC.
- 9) Save it and export it to PDF for printing.

**Expert Method: “Use the Preview”.** This is the very reason the preview file exists. *Disable any Bibliography software plugins before you begin.*

- 1) *Ensure your “Soton Thesis Preview” file has all of your Chapters included (see Expert Tip on this page) and open it.*
- 2) Go to “View > Outline > Show Subdocuments > Expand Subdocuments” as before. Click inside each grey box with your Initial and Chapter documents in, then press “Unlink” to bring the content into your file (*see Expert Tip on previous page*).
- 3) **Save it now.**
- 4) Resume from point 7 above.

**Now get that thing to the printer shop. Enjoy your rediscovered liberty!**