

# Practical Thesis Writing Tips

Submitted by Shaista Answer, who recently defended her MSc at IMS

Following is a summary of important thesis writing tips that trainees can use to assist them with getting started on their thesis writing.

- Read and follow the instructions provided by your graduate school which outlines the requirements, formatting and deadlines pertaining to your thesis submission. The guidelines provided by UofT SGS can be found here:  
<https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/academic-progress/program-completion/producing-your-thesis/>
- Review past theses written by previous students in your lab or in your department. Theses submitted to the UofT thesis repository can be found here:  
<https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/handle/1807/9944>
- Create a detailed outline of your thesis. Although the exact format of your thesis may vary depending on your department, the general outline includes an abstract, introduction/literature review, research questions and aims, materials and methods, results, conclusion and discussion/future directions.
- When creating your outline, include notes on important content that needs to be discussed for each section. For example, the introduction/literature review which forms the bulk of your theses, can be further divided into chapters and sub-chapters which narrow down the literature to your topic of interest.
- Review thesis submission deadlines according to your department and create reasonable deadlines to complete specific sections. This can be very beneficial to stay on track and to feel accomplished with your progress. Also, do not be discouraged when you don't accomplish tasks based on your schedule. Instead, re-evaluate your tasks and adhere to your newly set deadlines.
- Send drafts of your thesis to your supervisor regularly to get their input and advice to further improve your writing.
- Remember to take regular breaks. Research shows that taking mental breaks at regular intervals helps you to be more productive.
- And finally, proofread your thesis many times. Although you will be reading your thesis multiple times to edit your writing, you can also get input from your supervisor and other lab members.
- For further information, visit the UofT SGS FAQ page for specific questions on submission criteria, formatting and documentation:  
<https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/academic-progress/program-completion/faqs-etds/>
- Happy Writing!