



The  
University  
of Waikato  
*Te Whare Wānanga  
o Waikato*

**Department of Psychology**

# Guide for MSocSc Thesis and Dissertation Students

Released October 1995  
Updated September 1998  
Updated February 2000  
**Updated February 2002**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	Introduction .....	3
2.	Objectives of thesis/dissertation research .....	3
3.	Enrolment in MSocSc .....	3
4.	Important dates .....	4
5.	The Graduate Studies Committee .....	5
6.	Planning a thesis/dissertation .....	5
7.	Thesis/dissertation timetable .....	6
8.	Selecting a thesis/dissertation topic.....	7
9.	The role of the supervisor .....	9
10.	Planning your research .....	9
11.	Conducting the literature review .....	11
12.	Writing the Method Chapter.....	11
13.	Writing the Introduction/Literature review .....	12
14.	Collecting data .....	12
15.	Analysing data and writing the Results and Discussion .....	12
16.	Completing thesis/dissertation.....	12
17.	Presenting your thesis/dissertation.....	13
18.	Thesis/dissertation marking .....	14
19.	Financial assistance.....	15
20.	Publications.....	15
21.	Other sources of guidance.....	15
	Appendices	
	Appendix 1 – Timetable Chart .....	17
	Appendix 2 – Thesis/Dissertation Supervision .....	18

## 1. Introduction

Completing a thesis or a dissertation is a stimulating and demanding process. Conducting the research and writing up your thesis/dissertation can be a very rewarding achievement, especially if you plan well in advance, develop a time schedule for each of the activities involved in preparing your thesis/dissertation, and work steadily toward achieving your goals. This guide will get you started, as well as informing you of University and Departmental policies and procedures that you should observe.

## 2. Objectives of thesis/dissertation research

One of the important purposes of a Master's degree is to introduce students to original research under the supervision of a staff member. The primary value of a thesis or a dissertation is that, instead of studying a series of minor and highly-specified topics, you examine a sizeable topic for a much longer period of time and learn to both define research questions and describe and evaluate research findings. By the time the thesis/dissertation is completed you will have mastered some aspect of knowledge and will be much more aware of the processes of research.

In particular, you will gain experience with:

- formulating a research question
- making critical use of published work
- selecting and using appropriate research techniques
- organising and presenting material in a clear, well-written and well-presented manner.

## 3. Enrolment in MSocSc

Students intending to enrol in the MSocSc programme with a major in Psychology must meet certain criteria and obtain prior approval from the Psychology Department Graduate Studies Committee. To be eligible for entry into the Department's MSocSc programme, you must have:

- (a) a BSocSc(Hons) or equivalent degree, with a major in Psychology
- (b) a B+ average across all Psychology courses (or equivalent modules) which constituted your BSocSc(Hons) programme, and
- (c) two Psychology staff members' agreement that they are willing to be supervisors of your MSocSc thesis/dissertation, one as first (chief) supervisor, another as second or co-supervisor. (Note that while assistant lecturers may be second or co-supervisors, you will need to identify a lecturer, senior lecturer, associate professor or professor as your chief supervisor). Note also that qualified psychologists, with research experience working outside the university, may with prior approval of the department act as second supervisors.

You must complete the Graduate Programme Enrolment Form (MSocSc), which is available from the Psychology office, and return it with your Application to Enrol form to the Faculty office by the enrolment dates specified by the Faculty. (A copy of the form is on the website: <http://psychology.waikato.ac.nz>.)

The reverse side of the graduate enrolment form requests the following information:

1. a brief paragraph summary of the proposed research area
2. the names of staff who have agreed to supervise your research. You must have one first supervisor and one second or co-supervisor. The form must be signed by both your supervisors before we can confirm enrolment. (See Appendix 2 for a copy of the form.)

#### 4. Important dates and timeframes

Thesis/dissertation orientation meetings are typically held in September for students considering enrolling in a Masters in the following year. Staff describe the process of developing a thesis/dissertation topic, choosing supervisors, arranging supervision and proceeding with the research project. You should approach the staff members you would like to supervise your thesis/dissertation in September/October so that they can plan who they will be supervising in the following year.

Given the increasing pressures on staff supervision time, you may find your choice of topic and/or supervisor limited if you do not complete this form at an early date. As many academic staff take their annual leave in January, it is highly recommended you find your supervisor before the Christmas break.

A Master's thesis requires one academic year of full-time study (i.e., a project of about 1,400 hours or 40 hours per week in scope). A dissertation is equivalent to a one-semester, full-time project (700 hours in scope). In order to complete your thesis within that time, you will need to work steadily and efficiently. Students must enrol in the School of Social Sciences for a minimum period of two semesters of full-time study or equivalent (one semester for a dissertation), and to be eligible for the award of the degree (including Honours) must complete the requirements within four consecutive years of first enrolling for the degree.

Students are deemed to have commenced their programme of study on one of three recognised commencement dates:

- 1 March
- 1 August
- 1 December

The final date for the submission of your thesis/dissertation is the fourth Friday in February, July or November of the following year, respectively. Please note that most Psychology staff take their annual leave in January so you cannot always be certain that your supervisor(s) will be available at that time. Students who submit their theses/dissertations in February will not normally be able to graduate in the April ceremony. ***Students who wish to ensure graduation in April should submit their thesis or dissertation by 30 November in the previous year.*** All students who wish to graduate at a University ceremony should submit a notice of intention to graduate to the Graduation Office by the specified deadline, obtainable from the Graduate Office.

## 5. The Graduate Studies Committee

This committee is normally made up of 5-6 members of Psychology Department staff. The role of the committee is to consider all matters relating to graduates and postgraduates in the Department, which includes acceptance into the graduate programme, the design and implementation of new policies, and monitoring the progress of thesis/dissertation students. It also offers seminars from time to time, on topics relevant to thesis/dissertation research and writing.

## 6. Planning a thesis/dissertation

Planning your research can be made easier if you break the project down into smaller tasks and plan when and how each task can be completed. Primary tasks of a thesis/dissertation include:

1. Working with supervisors to find a research topic
2. Reviewing the literature on a topic
3. Selecting a specific research question
4. Developing an appropriate research methodology. Make sure all resources required are available including any equipment or computer programmes.
5. Obtaining ethical approval from the Department's Research Committee or from The University of Waikato Animal Research Ethics Committee
6. Writing the first draft of your Introduction/literature review
7. Either securing the participation of organisations or institutions, or make sure appropriate participants are available
8. Organising data collection, interviews, fieldwork, etc
9. Writing the first draft of your Method chapter/section
10. Collecting data
11. Analysing data
12. Writing the first draft of your Results chapter
13. Writing the first draft of your Discussion
14. Revising your Introduction and Method chapters/section
15. Revising and refining drafts of chapters. (Drafts should be submitted as they are written.)
16. Writing and assembling the rest of the thesis/dissertation: Title, Abstract, Acknowledgements, Table of Contents, List of Tables, References, Appendices
17. Final revision of the whole thesis/dissertation
18. Printing, binding and submission.

These tasks are listed in the order that we recommend you complete them. However with experimental theses it may be necessary to collect data and undertake data analysis concurrently with other activities. There is often some variation in the order we suggest. Sometimes students find their supervisors first, and then discuss a research topic. Data can be collected before the Literature Review and Method chapters are written, but we recommend that data collection follows the completion of at least an outline of the Literature Review, since reading will often suggest an improved design and better methods of collecting data.

## 7. Thesis/dissertation timetable

You may wish to develop your own target dates to help timetable your research and writing. We offer the following as a general guide, which applies to students whose commencement date is 1 March.

The following dates offer tentative guidelines for students wishing to complete their thesis by the end of their Master's year. The actual dates will vary from person to person and topic to topic. Appendix 1 contains sample year planners

***This information relates only to those enrolling in a thesis within the normal academic year. If you are enrolling in a dissertation or at a time other than 1 March, you should work out a suitable timetable with your supervisors.***

### **BSocSc(Hons) year**

In their Honours year full-time students normally take four courses. During the year you should think about a possible thesis topic if you are planning to go on to Masters and discuss this with potential thesis supervisors.

#### September:

A meeting will be held where a panel of staff will discuss matters such as choosing a thesis topic and arranging supervision. Students who have recently completed their theses will be on hand to talk to students about their experiences.

#### October - December

Explore your ideas with potential supervisors, two of whom must sign this form. And, if possible, secure the agreement of a first and second supervisor.

#### Summer vacation:

This is an opportunity for you to read widely in your thesis topic area. In some cases it may be possible to commence research.

### **MSocSc year (based on a one-year timetable)**

#### February:

You should make contact with your supervisors. By this stage, the topic area should be defined. Arrangements should be made between you and your supervisor for regular supervision sessions. A more specific proposal should now be developed.

#### April:

Develop method. Finalise sample. Complete Ethical Review form. Allow at least three weeks for Ethical Review. Prepare draft of Introduction and Method chapters.

#### May-June:

Obtain data. Continue to read in the topic area.

July-August:  
Data analysis.

September-October:  
Revise Introduction and Method chapters and begin writing Results and Discussion chapters. In many cases these will already be underway.

November:  
Revision and completion of thesis. Students who wish to be certain of graduating next April should have their thesis completed by the end of November. Students who submit their theses later may be able to graduate in April, but this is unlikely.

Please note that academic staff are expected to take their annual leave during the month of January, and so unless you have made alternative arrangements, your supervisor will not be available to you from 24 December until 1 February.

**Final date for thesis submission is the fourth Friday in February (or July or November for those who enrol in August or December respectively).**

Appendix 1 contains both a model timetable chart and a blank chart in which you can mark off your progress as the year progresses.

## 8. Selecting a thesis/dissertation topic

Staff are interested in many areas of Psychology and often welcome student interest in their ongoing research projects. See the Department's web pages for information on staff research interests. Many staff are also willing to supervise students in research projects chosen by the students themselves. Students are expected to have appropriate course preparation for a thesis topic, so be sure to include relevant courses in your BSocSc(Hons) degree.

No student can be accepted into the Masters degree until they have found a supervisor(s).

The best time to choose a topic area for your thesis/dissertation is in the year you are enrolled for the BSocSc(Hons). This is for two reasons: during the first year you will gain a wide exposure to various areas of psychology and completing the thesis will take the equivalent of two semesters of full-time work in which you are enrolled for the MSocSc. A dissertation will take the equivalent of one semester of full-time work.

To develop ideas of potentially interesting topics you should:

1. Talk to potential supervisors about topics
2. Review your course outlines, handouts and textbooks
3. Browse through recent issues of journals in areas of interest
4. Take a look at the masters theses in the cupboards outside the secretaries office.
5. Re-read seminar and lecture notes
6. Create the time and opportunity to think.

Above all, a thesis/dissertation topic should be interesting. Remember that you will be working on a thesis topic for at least a year, so try to choose a topic that will sustain your interest for that period of time. You should feel that your research is important and worthwhile and contributes to your learning. This will help to retain your motivation in periods of routine work on the thesis/dissertation.

Your supervisor will help you design the topic. Your chosen topic should be:

1. Amenable to research methods  
Your topic needs to be feasible in respect of both availability of data and the availability of tools for analysis. Some research projects and research methods are beyond the capabilities of students because of technical, cost or time requirements. It is important that the method chosen is appropriate in terms of the aims of the research.
2. Achievable in a reasonable time  
The project should be capable of being completed in one year (thesis) or one semester (dissertation) or the equivalent of part-time study. The M.Soc.Sc. thesis in Psychology is the equivalent of four masters courses. Therefore the time devoted to it should be about 1400 hours. The thesis should not exceed 30,000 words. The dissertation is equivalent to two masters courses or one semester's work. It should not exceed 15,000 words.
3. Make sure your project is well-designed so that the data will be interpretable, no matter the result.
4. Matched with your capabilities and interests  
The research topic and the methods employed should match both your interests and capabilities. This will sustain you in times of frustration.
5. Attractive for funding  
Some topics may attract funding. When acquiring funding for research extreme care should be given to ensure total independence to pursue the research: in other words, to ensure that the funding in no way affects or biases the research design, methodology and conclusions, or jeopardises your ability to complete your thesis on time.
6. An area for professional development  
Your thesis/dissertation may often be only the beginning of research on a topic. You may be able to make your thesis/dissertation a stepping-stone in your career, by selecting a topic that provides development in areas in which you hope to work.
7. A contribution to knowledge  
A Masters thesis/dissertation does not have to be entirely original: it is possible to replicate an earlier study. However, it should be based on a significant problem, research question or hypothesis. Your work should relate to, explain, solve or add proof to the question, problem or hypothesis. The results of your research should increase the knowledge of that particular field of inquiry.

Knowledge can be increased by:-

- New or improved evidence
- New or improved methodology
- New or improved analysis
- New or improved concepts or theories
- Any combination of the above

#### 8. Ethically approved

Before any student can begin data collection on any research project using human participants ethical approval must be obtained from the Department's Research Committee. (A copy of the Ethics Approval form is available from the Psychology office and on the Department's website: <http://psychology.waikato.ac.nz>). All changes in research procedure (e.g. from one treatment procedure to another) should only be made with the approval of the primary supervisor. A re-application for ethical approval is necessary if there are major changes to your methodology. Research with animals requires ethics approval from the University's Experimental Animal Ethics Review Committee.

### 9. The role of your supervisors

Your supervisors can offer guidance on methodological and theoretical issues as well as provide encouragement and support (see Appendix 4). It is important that the supervisor/student team works well. Regular contact is important. You are therefore recommended to discuss with your supervisors:

- frequency and duration of meetings: this may vary at different stages of the research, but would normally be every two to four weeks
- access to supervisor outside of scheduled meeting times
- who has responsibility to initiate meetings (if not scheduled regularly)
- protocol for when one person can't make the meeting
- expectations of feedback: how much, how often, in what form, with how much notice; (Departmental policy is that two weeks is reasonable for a chapter draft, three weeks for a draft of the entire thesis);
- support with theoretical content, eg resources, contacts; and how much can be expected, given the supervisor's knowledge of the area
- availability of supervisors during teaching recesses

Some supervisors and students prefer to formalise their arrangement with a contract, covering issues such as frequency of meetings, preparation for meetings, and authorship of subsequent publications. Further information about the supervision process can be found in Appendix 2.

## 10. Planning your research

It is crucial that your research is clear and well-planned if effort is not to be misdirected. A great deal of planning must go into your research project. Thesis/dissertation research is designed to enhance your skills in the following areas:

1. Formulation of a research question.
2. Identification of a "gap" in the research literature.
3. Formulation of a set of hypotheses or questions you wish to answer.
4. Preparation of a literature review pertinent to the research question.
5. Choice of a methodology and techniques that are appropriate to your research.
6. Description and justification of the chosen methodology and analyses.
7. Analysis, organisation and presentation of material into a logical, clear, convincing statement of the research, its goals, methods and findings.

Ask yourself about your own proposal:

1. Is the problem clearly stated?
  - Are hypotheses clear, unambiguous and testable?
  - If no hypotheses, are objectives clearly stated; can they be accomplished?
  - Is the scope of the problem manageable?
2. Is the methodology feasible?
  - Can the data be collected?
  - How will the data be analysed?
  - Will the analysis allow the acceptance or rejection of the hypotheses or the answering of the research question(s)?
  - Is the population from which the sample is to be drawn receptive to the research?
  - Will the interests of participants be protected?
3. What might the results of the analysis look like?
4. What would be the consequences of the following:
  - Experiment fails?
  - Data (for each major item) not available?
  - Analysis inconclusive?
  - Changes that might take place in the organisation you are researching.
5. Can major research activities be listed?
6. Can a time estimate be attached to each major activity?
7. Can the thesis/dissertation be accomplished in one year/six months of full time work, or is the thesis/dissertation trying to do too much? If yes, what would make the project more manageable?

## 11. Conducting the literature review and developing your method

A critical component of any research project is selecting the specific research question or questions to be answered or hypotheses to be tested and designing the methodology to examine these questions. For the research to have a specific purpose, the research questions should follow logically from what has or has not been investigated and theorised previously. When writing your thesis/dissertation you will need to establish the link between previous theory and research and your own research. To identify readings in the area, conduct a computer and/or paper literature search in the Library and ask your supervisor for key references. Your supervisor may be able to supply you with relevant articles or books. The best time to conduct this literature search is before you determine your own research questions and methodology.

When selecting research questions and methodology, estimate the resources (time, money, sample size) you will need to carry out the study. At most, you will have about 3-4 months within which to collect data, which may make a longitudinal design difficult to implement. If you plan to use interviews, you will have to limit your sample to complete them within three months.

Most thesis/dissertation students find that obtaining an appropriate sample usually takes some effort. Only a percentage of individuals contacted for interviews or mailed questionnaires agree to participate. You will need to consider very carefully the nature of the sample, its availability and the practicality of obtaining data from your sample. Read studies which have used similar designs.

If you are considering a design that involves collecting data within an organisation, approvals will need to be obtained from the organisation itself and from potential participants. The approval process often takes time and you may have to contact several organisations to arrange your sample. It is important to begin doing this early, while you are developing your research method.

Ethical approval is required before collecting any data, so be sure to submit your ethical approval application at least two to three weeks before you plan to collect your data.

## 12. Writing the 'Method' chapter/section

Before undertaking the data collection, you should write the first draft of the method describing exactly what you did in the research. Typically, there are three sections in a method chapter: Subjects/Respondents/Participants; Apparatus/Materials/Instruments; and Procedure. Recording the details at this time serves two purposes. First, it ensures that you have a clear grasp of the techniques (e.g. questionnaires) and procedures (e.g. interviewing) you will use. Secondly, you will be recording these details while they are fresh in your mind. Later on, you may wish to revise this chapter; this will be easy to do if you have written an early draft. It is often appropriate to include discussion of the ethical issues involved in your research. Remember that your description of the method should be detailed enough to allow other researchers to replicate your study. It should also provide sufficient information to allow readers to make a reasoned judgement about the credibility of your research.

### **13. Writing the 'Introduction/Literature Review'**

While you are arranging the data collection, you should also be working on the first draft of your Introduction/literature review. In this chapter you will describe and critically review previous literature on the topic. Sometimes it may be appropriate to divide the literature review into more than one chapter. The literature review should be comprehensive enough to cover previous theory and research which is relevant to your topic, but should not include information which is only tangentially relevant. It is usual to end the literature review with a description of your own research question and/or hypotheses.

### **14. Collecting data**

By this time you will have already decided upon and received Ethical Approval for your data collection procedures. You should develop a timetable for yourself so that you can be sure all thesis data are collected by the end of September, at the latest. If you want to change your procedure at all, perhaps in the light of experience, be sure to discuss this with your supervisor.

Many researchers pilot test their procedures on a few participants before finalising their data collection method, and this is recommended by the Department. By doing so, you can iron out the bugs in your data collection methods and instruments, and possibly obtain additional ideas on procedures and approaches to your research questions.

### **15. Analysing data and writing the 'Results' and 'Discussion' chapters**

Once the data have been collected, the next step is to analyse them. This may involve statistical or content analyses. Your supervisor will help you in selecting appropriate methods for data analysis.

At this stage, drafts of your Introduction and Method can be revised and the Results and Discussion written. The Discussion involves interpreting findings, relating findings to previous literature and exploring the implications and suggestions for further research. This chapter usually includes some comments on the limitations of your research. In some cases, the Research and Discussion can be combined.

Allow time for your supervisor to read drafts of your thesis/dissertation chapters as they are produced. Normally your supervisor will expect to review one or two drafts of each chapter, and a draft of the entire thesis/dissertation before it is finally submitted.

### **16. Completing your thesis/dissertation**

The completed thesis/dissertation will include an abstract, acknowledgements, table of contents, list of tables and/or figures, references and appendices.

The abstract, though brief, is often quite difficult to write. It summarises what you have done, how you did it and your key findings. References should follow the APA format. You may also wish to look at recent theses to give you a sense of length, comprehensiveness and writing style

## 17. Presenting your thesis/dissertation

The regulations governing the presentation of a thesis/dissertation are printed in the University Calendar. Students should refer to the section entitled Dissertations and Theses. This covers the regulations and information relating to word limits for theses, formatting and binding requirements and the process relating to submission. Please note that when preparing a title page for a Psychology 4-paper thesis, the correct wording is 'a thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Social Sciences.' However, if a 2-paper dissertation is being submitted, the wording is 'a dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Social Sciences'. The thesis should be black with gold lettering.

Also, the Library has produced a useful booklet "A Guide to the Presentation of Theses" which is available from the Psychology Office. Psychology students should note the following changes to the Guide when submitting Psychology theses/dissertations:

- (a) Report style and referencing should conform with the style described in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (4th ed., 1994). See relevant A.P.A. journals for examples and check with your supervisor. Note that Anglicised spelling is used (except where citing the title of a journal or book or when quoting directly from text).
- (b) The list of references mentioned in the text is entitled **REFERENCES**, not **Bibliography** .
- (c) In the reference list the dates are put in brackets after the author's name .

*It is your responsibility to ensure that the language (grammar, spelling, punctuation) used in your thesis/dissertation is consistently of a high standard. It is a good idea to ask a friend or colleague to proof read your final draft. 'Typos' are difficult to detect and often a new eye will pick up errors which you may have missed.*

Do not underestimate the importance of language and presentation. Although no thesis/dissertation with inadequate content will be accepted (however good the presentation), a thesis/dissertation with adequate content but poor presentation will often be marked down. Presentation can be improved by the careful selection and organisation of the most important material, by the deletion of unnecessary material and replication, by a logical structure, and by clear and concise writing.

Allow time for final corrections, printing and binding. For a thesis, you are required to submit three copies to Academic Services Division, two of which are deposited in the Library. The Department will pay for the printing and binding costs of the third copy, which will be held in the Psychology Department. You will need to think about how many other copies you will need - for yourself, for your supervisor(s), for the

organisation which supplied your participants, for friends or family. A less expensive spiral binding will often suffice for these additional copies.

Two copies of a dissertation should be submitted to the Department, not to Academic Services Division. Spiral binding is acceptable.

## **18. Thesis/dissertation marking**

Please remember that the entire thesis/dissertation marking process usually takes approximately three months from when the thesis/dissertation is submitted to when a grade is entered at Examinations.

The following is Departmental procedure concerning marking of theses and dissertations.

### **Preliminary arrangements**

(a) It is the responsibility of the primary supervisor to arrange for an external assessor for a thesis, and a dissertation. Note that if an appropriate external assessor is unavailable, a dissertation may be assessed by an internal assessor. In neither case will this person have been involved significantly in the supervision of the thesis or dissertation.

- Unless assessors have requested otherwise, all reports on students' theses/dissertations are given to them after they are informed of their overall thesis/dissertation grade, but the information given to students does not include the recommended grades from the assessor.

### **Marking procedure**

Two copies of the thesis/dissertation are received by the Department Administrator. One copy is sent to the external assessor.

The supervisor provides a brief contextual report, outlining any special circumstances which may have affected the conduct of the research or the writing of the thesis.

The supervisor, after consultation with the second supervisor, writes a brief report and recommends a grade.

The assessor is asked to provide an evaluative report on the quality of the work, as well as a recommended mark/grade.

Upon receipt of the assessor's report and the supervisor's mark/grade recommendation, the Graduate Convenor determines the final grade for the thesis/dissertation. Where the recommended grades do not vary by more than two sub-grades (e.g. B- to B+), the recommended grades are averaged. Where the grades differ by more than two levels, the Graduate Convenor mediates between the supervisor and the assessor, and if agreement is not reached, seeks a further assessment.

Once a final grade is determined, the supervisor and the administration assistant complete the documentation. The Administrator gives the thesis/dissertation results form and the reports to the Graduate Studies Convenor who reviews and approves the documentation. The final results form is then signed by the Chairperson, forwarded to the Dean of the School for signature, and then to Examinations in Academic Services.

The Department's thesis administrator notifies students, unofficially, of the final grade, and supplies them with the assessor's report, minus the recommended grade.

## **19. Financial assistance**

Students may make an application to the Departmental Research Committee for reimbursement of certain thesis-related research costs, normally up to \$500 per thesis, or \$250 for a dissertation. (See the website for a copy of the Departmental policy and application form for this funding). This amount is reviewed periodically. Retain your receipts for expenses if you plan to apply to the Department for reimbursement.

Some funding may also be available for conference attendance. (See the website)

## **20. Publications**

There are three major reasons for publishing thesis/dissertation research. First, writing research for publication requires different (though complementary) skills to those involved in thesis/dissertation writing. Experience in writing for publication will be very valuable to you in your career and will help you to develop important writing skills. Secondly, the empirical data you collect can make a significant contribution to the development of your subject, but only if this information is disseminated! Finally, publication enhances your career prospects as well as the public profile of the Psychology Department.

We encourage you to conduct research which is potentially publishable and to regard the publication of your research findings as a natural sequel to writing up the thesis/dissertation. Normally journal publication would be done in collaboration with your thesis/dissertation supervisor, whose input should have contributed to the quality of the research as well as the published paper, and who is usually recognised as a co-author.

## **21. Other sources of guidance**

This manual provides only a brief guide to conducting a thesis/dissertation. Other sources to turn to are:

American Psychological Association. (1994) Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (4th. ed.). Washington, D.C.: Author.

Bell, Judith, Doing your research project: A guide for first time researchers in education and social science, Open University Press, 2nd edition, LB 1028. B433, 1993.

- Lewins, F. (1987). Writing a thesis: A guide to its nature and organisation. Canberra: Australian National University.
- Mauch, J. and Birch, J, Guide to successful theses and dissertations: Conception to publication, 2nd Ed, LB 2369. M447, 1989.
- New Zealand Psychological Society. (1986). Code of ethics. In New Zealand Psychological Society, Member's Handbook (2nd. ed.) (pp 31-40). Wellington: Author.
- Sternberg, R.J. (1988). The Psychologist's companion: A guide to scientific writing for students and researchers (2nd. ed.). Leicester: British Psychological Society.
- Suezle, M. (1981). Designing and conducting small-scale research projects. In L. Borzak (Ed.), Field study (pp. 160-176). California: Sage.
- University of Waikato Psychology Department. (1995). General guide for psychology students
- University of Waikato. (1997). Theses and dissertations. In University of Waikato Calendar, 1997 (pp. 655-656).
- University of Waikato Library. (1988). Guide to the presentation of theses at the University of Waikato (6th. ed.).
- University of Waikato Library. Library Guide.
- Williams, J.M. (1990). Style : Toward clarity and grace. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Insert Timetable chart and blank chart

## DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY Thesis/Dissertation Supervision

As part of the general supervision of a student's progress, supervisors should:

- (a) give guidance about the nature of research and the standard expected, about the planning of the research programme, about literature and sources, and about requisite techniques (including arranging for instruction where necessary);
- (b) maintain regular contact in accordance with departmental policy and in the light of discussion of arrangements with the student;
- (c) be accessible to the student at other appropriate times when he or she may need advice;
- (d) give advice on the necessary completion dates of successive stages of the work so that the whole may be submitted within the scheduled time;
- (e) request written work as appropriate, and return that work with constructive criticism and in reasonable time: two weeks for a chapter and three weeks for a full draft.
- (f) ensure that the student is made aware of the inadequacy of progress or of standards of work below that generally expected, and where necessary suggest appropriate action;
- (g) arrange external and internal examiners, and brief them in accordance with Departmental policy;

The responsibilities of the student include:

- (i) responding to the arrangements proposed and the advice and instruction given by the supervisor;
- (ii) discussing with the supervisor the type of guidance and comment he or she finds most helpful and agreeing on a schedule of meetings;
- (iii) taking the initiative in raising problems and difficulties, however elementary they may seem;
- (iv) maintaining the progress of the work in accordance with the stages agreed with the supervisor, including in particular the presentation of written material as required in sufficient time to allow for comments and discussion before proceeding to the next stage.

Students are reminded that compliance with the thesis/dissertation regulations and the quality of their work is ultimately their responsibility. The role of the supervisor is to assist to achieve the best result of which they are capable.

Accordingly, if students consider that their work is not proceeding satisfactorily for reasons outside their control, or if they consider they are not establishing an effective working relationship with their supervisor they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with either the Convenor of the Graduate Studies Committee (Jane Ritchie), or the Chairperson of the Department (Mary Foster).