

**Subject title:** Thesis Writing for Research Students

**Subject code:** ELC6002

**Credit value:** Nil

**Pre-requisites:** ELC6001

**Contact hours:** 39

## **Objective**

This subject aims to improve students' ability to analyse and apply generic structures and linguistic features in postgraduate degree theses.

## **Learning outcomes**

By the end of the subject, students should be able to present their research effectively in a thesis through

1. summarising the study in the Abstract,
2. introducing the background, rationale and objectives of the study in the Introduction,
3. reviewing the literature,
4. describing the method used in the study,
5. describing and discussing the findings of the study, and
6. summarising and assessing the significance of the study in the Conclusion.

To achieve the above outcomes, students are expected to use language and text structure appropriate to the context, select information critically, cite and review sources appropriately and critically, present and support stance and opinion, and analyse the impact and significance of the research.

## **Content**

This syllabus is indicative. The balance of the components, and the corresponding weighting, will be based on the specific needs of the students.

With regard to the organisational structures and linguistic features appropriate to different sections of the research thesis, the course will focus on the following:

Planning and organising the thesis; summarising, evaluating and citing sources; describing quantitative and qualitative data; presenting interpretations of data; using appropriate grammatical structures, vocabulary and register; achieving coherence and cohesion; maintaining clarity; using appropriate academic style; and revising and proofreading.

## **Teaching and learning approach**

The course is designed to introduce students to the language and skills they will need to write their research thesis effectively.

The study method is primarily seminar-based. Activities include teacher input as well as individual and group work involving writing practice, evaluation of texts, mini-

presentations and discussions. Practical work will involve analysing texts such as journal articles and theses that are relevant to students' research areas. Students will be provided with opportunities to apply the language skills acquired to the preparation of their own thesis. Students will be referred to information on the Internet and the ELC's Centre for Independent Language Learning.

Learning materials developed by the English Language Centre are used throughout this course. Additional reference materials will be recommended as required.

## **Assessment**

Continuous assessment: 100%

Students will be assessed on their cohesion and coherence, linguistic accuracy and language appropriateness in fulfilling the task requirements of assignments and activities related to the learning outcomes.

## **Indicative references**

- Calabrese, R. L. (2006). *The elements of an effective dissertation and thesis: A step-by-step guide to getting it right the first time*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Cooley, L. and Lewkowicz, J. (2003). *Dissertation writing in practice: Turning ideas into text*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Dunleavy, P. (2003). *Authoring a PhD: How to plan, draft, write, and finish a doctoral dissertation*. Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foss, S. K. & Waters, W. (2007). *Destination dissertation: A traveler's guide to a done dissertation*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Golden-Biddle, K. & Locke, K. (2007). *Composing qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Luey, B. (Ed.). (2008). *Revising your dissertation: Advice from leading editors* (2nd ed.). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Lunenburg, F. C. & Irby, B. J. (2008). *Writing a successful thesis or dissertation: Tips and strategies in the social and behavioural sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Potter, S. (Ed.). (2006). *Doing postgraduate research* (2nd ed.). Milton Keynes: Open University; London: Sage.
- Swales, J. M. & Feak, C. B. (2000). *English in today's research world: A writing guide*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Swales, J. M. & Feak, C. B. (2004). *Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks and skills* (2nd ed.). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Weissberg, R. and Buker, S. (1990). *Writing up research: Experimental research report writing for students of English*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents.