

WRITING YOUR THESIS

The purpose of a Ph.D. thesis or dissertation in science and engineering is to present the candidate's original research in a clear and logical way.

Here are a few general hints:

- ❖ **Plan your research:** Make an overall plan for the thesis as early as possible. Discuss it with your supervisors, and modify it as you are working on your research.
- ❖ **Make a draft outline:** Have a draft outline thesis plan together with a timetable pinned on a noticeboard. Check how you are doing on your timetable.
- ❖ **Start as soon as possible:** Even starting with rough notes for paragraphs or chapters can give a good psychological boost. Thesis writing does not necessarily have to start with chapter one. Write the easiest sections or chapters first.
- ❖ **Leave introduction and conclusion to the last:** It is common for conclusions and introductions to be written last when you have a thorough awareness of the purpose and implications of your research.
- ❖ **Have backup copies of your chapters:** Use a wordprocessor and take great care to protect every computer file with multiple backup copies in different locations. Make periodic hard copies, i.e. printouts, of your work.
- ❖ **Keep your bibliography from the beginning:** Bibliographies should not be left until the last moment. Using a Personal Reference System these can mostly be compiled as the research progresses.
- ❖ **Discuss drafts and chapters periodically:** Draft sections or chapters should be discussed with supervisors as early as possible. Use their comments and feedback for revision and consult your supervisors on the new versions.
- ❖ **If possible, get your research published:** In science and engineering, candidates are often encouraged to publish the results of their research before their thesis is completed. This provides an excellent form of review.