

Department of Biochemistry & Microbiology  
Guidelines & Suggestions for Preparation of Honours Theses

Each candidate must submit one copy of their completed thesis to their supervisor and to each of their examiners on or before the due date. No copies need be submitted to the main office or to the honours coordinator. The submitted version of the thesis should be the final version. It must not be a draft version of the work.

A typical undergraduate thesis is usually less than 50 pages. There is no maximum allowed length; although your examiners will value brevity. Nevertheless, your supervisor may suggest or require that you include a large number of figures, tables and graphs that give the appearance of bulk without actually being verbose. Neither the references nor appendices count toward the length of a thesis.

The thesis and its defense are designed to allow the student to demonstrate their knowledge of the stated hypothesis and research methodology underlying a specific set of experiments. The student is judged primarily on how well they understand the hypothesis and the experiments and secondarily on the significance of any finding. This means that a student can successfully write and defend a thesis with incomplete or inconclusive results.

These guidelines should help you to organize your thoughts so that your examiners can evaluate your performance.

A thesis usually consists of the following:

Title page	(sample attached)
Abstract	(not more than 1 page)



and the rationale for the experimental procedure is clearly defined.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The discussion should be an interpretation of the results. Reference should be made to the literature cited in the introduction, and the relevance of the research should be clearly stated. A certain amount of speculation is allowed, but it must be clearly identified.

Since the nature of biochemical and microbiological research varies, no strict guidelines can be laid down as to the optimal or maximal lengths of the results and discussion sections. In special cases, where the subject matter warrants, the format may be altered with the approval your supervisor. For example, a combined "Results and Discussion" section might be more appropriate for your work.

#### 5. CONCLUSIONS

A paragraph summing up your findings and emphasizing any novel aspect of the research is often a valuable aid to a reader. The conclusion should be no more than 1 page.

#### 6. REFERENCES

One of two reference systems may be used:

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Sample title page:

THE POLYADENYLATION OF MOUSE mRNA DURING  
MAMMARY GLAND DEVELOPMENT

Sonia P. Davis

Thesis submitted to the  
Department of Biochemistry & Microbiology  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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