

## General principles and formal requirements for writing the thesis

### Principles

The thesis written about a public health subject based on genuine data is to prove the student's factual knowledge, ability for synthesis in data collection, process and interpretation. It demonstrates the student's skills to design studies, plan local or national public health programs in a given topic.

The thesis should be logically structured. Thoughts are to be expressed clearly, with felicitous terminology. Students have to interpret the (observed) phenomena, data with aimed unambiguousness, and compare them to findings from other sources of literature. In addition to the interpretation of findings, possibilities for changing the observed tendencies should also be discussed. The correct scientific style, accurate use of terminology and precise composition are inevitable; furthermore, the work should be notable and interesting.

### Guideline to structure the sections

1. **Introduction:** discuss the public health importance of the chosen study subject, supported by references from the literature; formulate the issues to be examined and the aims of the investigation. If needed, hypothesis may be established here, and former own findings cited.
2. **Data and methods:** clearly define the data applied in the study; list sources of data, information about the collection and process of data and its circumstances; describe the applied methods in such details that based on those, the soundness and adequacy of data and methods can be assessed, possibly the study repeated by an expert scientist.
3. **Results:** delineate detailed results illustrated on tables and graphs; give the values of applied statistical methods (number of parallel experiments, measurements, standard deviation, p value expressing significance level, information about confidence intervals, etc.).
4. **Discussion:** compare the described findings, results to the observations of other publications; try to explain and interpret the reported phenomena, findings (but abstain from conclusions professionally unfounded and not supported by the results). If you have recommendations, discuss them also here.
5. **Abstract:** contains the essence of the work (state what questions the work is about to answer, refer to the methods, delineate the most important results and conclusions); has to be per se understandable (it often appears detached from the study, e.g. MEDLINE). The extent of the Abstract should be about 10% of the thesis.
6. **Illustrations:** the tables, graphs, maps etc. have to be understandable in themselves, without reading other parts of the thesis; their content should clearly emerge from the titles; always indicate legends (definition of applied measures, units, clear identification of columns, lines etc. should not be missing even if they are identical on several consecutive figures). Graphical illustrations may be embedded in, or collected at the end of the text. In the latter case, if the number of graphical illustrations exceeds five, a List of illustrations or annexes should be made, which has to be placed before the illustrations in the thesis.
7. **References:** are aimed to accurately inform the readers about the sources from where the author gained the cited data, facts, information, etc. Therefore all the sources of information included in the work have to be identified in the bibliography; conversely, the bibliography must not contain references not mentioned in the text.

### Composition of references

It may follow two different structures, but in a thesis only one of these can be used.

- a) *Author/date*: the name of author and date of publication appear in the text of thesis (“according to Brennan and Bray [2002]” or “as confirmed by an other publication [Brennan and Bray, 2002]”). If the publication has two authors, both need to be mentioned in the text; if the number of authors exceeds two, the “et al.” expression should be used [Pardell et al., 2001]. The order of references in the bibliography follows the alphabetical order of the first authors’ names.
- b) *Numbering*: the references are numbered consecutively in the order in which they are first mentioned in the text of the thesis, writing the numbers in (preferably square) brackets (“according to Brennan [3]” or “as confirmed by others [3]”) or as superscripts (“supported by Brennan’s<sup>1</sup> findings”). In this structure, the bibliography is composed according to the numbers of references in ascending order.

### Designation of sources of literature (references) in the bibliography

Should be made according to the following principles in both structures:

- *journal article*: the authors’ surnames, initials of given names, title of article, place of publication (title of journal), number of volume (underlined or bold), first and last page numbers of the article, year of publication; e. g.: Brennan P, Bray I. Recent trends and future directions for lung cancer mortality in Europe. *Br J Cancer*, **87**:43-8, 2002
- *book*: Donaldson RJ, Donaldson LJ. *Essential Public Health Medicine*. Kluwer, Dordrecht, 1993
- *citation of a chapter from an edited book*: Morris AS. Screening. In: Rothman KJ, Greenland S (eds.) *Modern Epidemiology*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Lippincott, Philadelphia, 1998
- *publications without author*: Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic 2004, 4<sup>th</sup> Global Report. UNAIDS, 2004 (If statistical data are cited, the number of table or page containing the data has to be mentioned, too.)
- *personal communication*: appears in the text in brackets, e. g.: (Kardos L – personal communication). Should not be included in the bibliography.

### Formal requirements

- The thesis has to be written using a computer based word processing program (e. g. Microsoft Word). The character size has to be 12, the line spacing 1.5 or double. A margin of 2.5 cm shall be left at the top and the bottom of the page, and 3 cm on the left and right hand side of the page. The pages of the thesis have to be numbered.
- The extent of the thesis has to be at least 6000 but should not exceed 8000 words. The word count of the text or a highlighted part can be determined using the “Word count” function from the “Tools” menu of the MS Word application.
- The title page should contain the title of the thesis, the names of the author and supervisor, the title of the School of Public Health, the name of its director, and the date of completion.
- The title page has to be followed by the Table of contents, which indicates the titles and the starting page numbers of the main sections.
- The Abstract is to be inserted after the Table of contents; its extent should not be longer than 10% of the whole work. The Abstract is followed by the text of thesis.
- If the graphical illustrations are given collected in Annexes, those should succeed the text of thesis, provided with List of annexes where needed.
- The last part of the thesis has to be the bibliography, which should be prepared as described above.

- Two copies of the thesis should be handed in bound, in an aesthetic form, signed by the supervisor and on electronic media (in pdf format).