Writing a Successful Part II Thesis
Louise Baron BSc PhD

Successful?
- Rigour in evidence and argument
- Clarity in evidence and argument
- Correct presentation and attention to detail
- Written as economically as possible, within the strict page limit

Unsuccessful?
- Shallow, narrow approach
- Poor understanding and little sign of thought in selection of material or structure of report
- Conclusions may be lacking or flawed
Project Report

1. Presentation and organisation
   - Structure and presentation, including figures, diagrams and tables.

2. Quality and clarity
   - Readability, accuracy and clarity of arguments. Grammar, spelling and syntax.

3. Background and Context
   - The science that underpins the work. The scientific context, aims and significance of the project, including knowledge of previous work. Quality of literature survey.

4. Experimental
   - Clear description of the experimental work at an appropriate level of detail.

5. Analysis and interpretation
   - Scientific accuracy, analysis and interpretation of results.

6. Conclusions and future work
   - Accuracy and logic of conclusions, plans for future work.

---

Rigour

- Understand formal logic
- Avoid common fallacies
- How sound is the evidence?
- Anticipate the viva

---

Clarity

- Be specific!
- Be precise!
Presentation

- Use the template!
- Attention to detail
- Make the figures look professional

Economy

- Well thought-out document structure
- Avoid vagueness – be precise
- Never stray from the point

How to write a successful Part II Thesis...

Plan
- What is your conclusion; and how did you get there?
- What must be included?
- What must be excluded?

Structure
- Where did you start?
- How did you proceed?
- What are your judgements and interpretations?
- What do you conclude?
- Where next?

Write
- 3-phase Process
Structure & Content

What I plan to do, and why
What I saw & what I think
What I did
My position

Product A v Product B
Comparative study

Product A before snow
Product A after snow
Product B before snow
Product B after snow

results results results results
Writing about it

Results/discussion

Before snow
Product A
Product B

After snow
Product A
Product B

Or...?

Results/discussion

Product A

Before snow

After snow

Product B

Before snow

After snow

Reminders for yourself...!

Here I'm going to describe the way I applied the products...

Here I will explain what was measured and why...

Here I will talk about why I think timing is more important than product used...
The 3-phase writing process

What?

How?

Check!
Avoiding Plagiarism

- Be thorough and systematic
- Understand the “conversation”
- Understand the context of sources
  - Chronological, theoretical etc
- Cite as you write
- What about “common knowledge”?  
  - Fact or opinion/interpretation
- Seek advice!
Some help…

- Harvard Guide to Using Sources

http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/

Editing and proofing

- Wait!
- Check facts, figures, citations
- Take breaks
- Read it backwards
Please back up

• Stuff happens!
• Hardcopy

Successful!

• Rigour in evidence and argument ✓
• Clarity in evidence and argument ✓
• Correct presentation and attention to detail ✓
• Written as economically as possible, within the strict page limit ✓

Writing a Successful Part II Thesis

Louise Baron BSc PhD