

Thesis Abstract Preparation Guidelines

1. Be sure the abstract indicates the results in addition to identifying the subjects treated. It is not merely a table of contents, but a brief summary of the work as well, including its purpose, methodology, results and conclusions.
2. Keep the abstract short, approximately one typewritten page and fewer than 500 words. Writing in complete sentences, and use the same style, tenses and approach as in the summary sections of the thesis, itself.
3. Do not hesitate to use a simple equation in the abstract if it can compress a great deal of information; if you do so, be sure to define all symbols and terms.
4. Abstracts, in general, should not contain references, figures or extensive tables.
5. A three-paragraph format is common because it is effective: statement of problem; method of attack; results.
6. The abstract should be written for a wider audience than the body of the thesis. Therefore, you should avoid excessively technical jargon or items which can be understood only by reference to the thesis, itself. The abstract is not merely part of the thesis—it must be able to stand alone.
7. Write the abstract as if it is the only part of your work most people will ever read; recognize and accept your role and responsibility as the person most qualified to prepare this key synopsis.