Thesis Writing
Format

• Thesis chapters
  – Literature review
  – Method
  – Results and Discussion
  – Introduction
  – Conclusions and Further Work

• Approaching the Thesis Write-Up
Typical thesis structure

• Introduction
  – Context, why work important
• Literature Review
  – What has been done before
• Method
  – Work done to test hypothesis
• Results and Discussion
  – Vital determinant of thesis grade
• Conclusions and Further Work
Typical thesis structure

• Note that this structure is not mandatory
  – Adjusted according to topic
  – Advice from supervisor

• Examples
  – Method, Results and Discussion can become one chapter - Experimental results
  – Chapter headings change to reflect emphasis of content
Evidence of Nothing

- Is NOT nothing for evidence!
- Half Full or Half Empty?
- Whatever you find out
  - Codify it
  - Reflect on what learnt
  - Why did it not work?
Thesis Chapters

• Literature Review
  – Presents previous published work related to:
    • each aspect of your hypothesis
      – Balance amount according to importance
      – Eg. Genetic Algorithms, Neural Net structures, Stock Index characteristics
    • the methods you intend to use to test your hypothesis
      – Survey / questionnaire design and method of use
Thesis Chapters

- Literature Review Contents
  - Consistent level of prior knowledge (references)
  - Explain work that has been done before, how tested and evaluated and why needs to be developed / improved
  - Not just your bright idea and your evaluation standards*
Thesis Chapters

• Method
  – The approach used to test the hypothesis
  – Validity of methods established in Lit Review
    • May need to add extra references to explain particular quirks in your approach
  – Difficult to avoid recital of ‘what you did’
    • Can hint at some of the results in so far as they influence what you then did
  – Sequential and / or by topic
Thesis Chapters

- Results and Discussion
  - Have this in mind as you read for and write literature review
  - Be systematic in recording your results
  - Stop development and testing to allow time for reflection - what have you found out?
  - You WILL have discovered something interesting!
Thesis Chapters

• Introduction
  – Hardest to write as seems either too little or too much
  – Helps examiner answer question about importance and relevance of work
  – Set out overall context and how this (small) piece of work fits in and contributes
  – Explain what trying to establish
Thesis Chapters

• Conclusion and further work
  – Short summary
    • Set out to establish X but found Y
    • Maybe if used Q (as discussed in lit review) , better results
    • Need to see if Y still holds in circumstance Z
    • Questions over the use of R still remain in regard to ...
  – Other interesting comments
    • Should be positive!
Presenting Your Results

• Presentation of results as important as results themselves
  – Needs thought, planning, iteration and discussion

• Raw results or summaries?
  – appendices

• Statistical tests and results?

• Tabulate or plot?
Writing Order

• Does not have to be beginning to end
  – Middle out
    • Methods and results
    • Experiments (encompasses both)
    • Then know
      – what have to introduce in lit review
      – what can properly conclude!
  – Introduction often written last!
Remembering

• The thoughts that occur to you but
  – Not for this chapter
  – Not sure where they belong

• Post-It notes
  – Write it down somewhere!

• Discuss with supervisor
Getting It All Together

• Time between ‘final’ content and thesis delivery
• Allow around a week for this
  – Final cull of grammar and sense errors
  – References correctly cited and presented
  – Figures and Tables labelled and referred to consistently
  – Diagram placement and does Word lie?
Getting It All Together

• Common frustrations
  – Front pages
    • Roman numbering
  – Other chapters
    • Sequentially from first page of intro

• Section Heading placement
  – Consistent

• Style for Headings
Thesis Countdown

• Draft Thesis due Wed 25th May
  – Discuss with supervisor how to manage this
    • Chapter by chapter discussion and revision
    • As whole on due date

• Essential to have detailed plan of honours activities
  – Weekly targets
  – Daily schedule if panicking
    • Allow time for R&R
Managing Your Supervisor

• Arrange in advance how you are to get feedback and advice on what you have written
  – Realistic turnaround time
  – Minimise re-reading
  – Fit in with other honours students and marking demand
Thesis Countdown

• Presentation week beginning 30th May
  – Must have results and discussion organised by then!
  – Should practice at least twice with supervisor and friends

• 25 minute slots but prepare 20 minute speak / 3 mins question time

• will be video-conferenced
Thesis Countdown

• Wed June 15th
  – The end of your honours year!
  – Hand in 5 copies
    • Pay for binding of own copy or copies
    • Short Title

• Finishing Off
  – Arrange burning of your work to CD
  – optionally submit thesis to Eprint repository
  – Tidy up work space and vacate (by end of June?)
  – Move on to fame and fortune?
Thesis Help

• Help from
  – Previous theses as recommended
  – Your supervisor
  – Study Skills Centre
    • or David Waters
  – Peter Vamplew/Jacky Hartnett
    • Peter.Vamplew@utas.edu.au or phone extension 2932
    • J.Hartnett@utas.edu.au or phone extension 3392
Assessment

• Please refer to web site:
  – 6% presentation
  – 6% supervisor
  – 24% supervisor on thesis
  – 24% unknown second assessor on thesis
    • Important for honours scholarships that even supervisor does not know who this is
    • Must be able to show process so no collusion likely between 2 assessors