

Before you start

- ▶ The aim of this checklist is to assist doctoral students in writing their thesis and in publishing in accordance with the norms and values of academic and research integrity.
- ▶ The checklist helps guide students to prepare their thesis and research articles in line with the best research practices, uphold responsible research conduct, and avoid questionable research practices.
- ▶ The checklist is to be used throughout the process of thesis preparation and publication.
- ▶ Be aware that the list might need to be adapted to your own needs depending on the research field, your past experience, and in accordance with institutional research policies.

Name:

General tips

- ▶ Keep a research diary to help you save all important information.
- ▶ Use appropriate tools for working with literature sources, for example, reference management software.
- ▶ If possible, choose a topic that interests you and that you understand (or want to understand).
- ▶ It is advised that you share your experiences with fellow doctoral students, in both your own field of studies and those of others.
- ▶ It is important for you to enculturate yourself in your field of study.
- ▶ Be sure to interact with the research community, exchange ideas, and participate in academic events relevant to your work or field of study.
- ▶ Be aware of your limits and do not be afraid to say where they are to prevent burn-out.

Pre-writing preparations

General preparations for me as a doctoral student

- If any of these are not fulfilled, seek institutional advice.
- I have checked my university's formal requirements for my research work and, if applicable, have taken the required courses.
- I know what the thesis quality requirements are at my institution. One idea is to read a thesis from a previous year.
- I know where to find information on the thesis writing tasks and process and whom/what to consult if I have any questions (e.g., the supervisor, university library, and writing centre).

Academic and research integrity

- I have knowledge of academic and research integrity, including of various breaches such as contract cheating, paper mills, gift authorship, plagiarism, and data management issues. I am aware of the consequences of dishonesty in research and of other breaches of institutional codes.
- I have received appropriate training in academic and research integrity and, if not, have checked the availability of relevant courses and training at my institution.
- I know how to find documents, such as codes of ethics and institutional requirements, that are applicable to my research.
- I take personal responsibility that my thesis and publication work will be conducted with respect for academic and research integrity.

Preparations for my research work

- My supervisor and I have set up a suitable work schedule, we have agreed on individual or group meetings and on the timeline that I will follow.
- My supervisor and I have discussed how and when I can reach him/her; we have agreed to respect each other's working hours and avoid contacting each other on the weekends and during vacation time.
- I have checked what permissions I need for my research (e.g., permission to use measurement instruments and existing data, and to conduct research at an organisation).
- I have checked whether my research requires ethical approval.
- I have checked the requirements for handling personal data and for data protection that apply to my research work (e.g., GDPR).

In process

Formulating research questions and the study design

- I have had my thesis topic approved by my supervisor.
- I know how my thesis will make a contribution that distinguishes it from previous work.
- I understand the assignment, and I know what the goal of the thesis is and how to achieve it.
- My supervisor and I have discussed and agreed on the scope of my research and on what knowledge and/or skills are needed to implement the research design.
- I am confident that I have the necessary skills to implement the research design.
- I have discussed possible conflicts of interest with my supervisor.
- I have carefully designed the research methodology to correspond to my research question(s) and I discussed it with my supervisor before I started writing.

Research

Data collection

- My supervisor and I have discussed the proper ways of collecting, recording, and managing research data and have agreed on how these tasks will be done in my research.
- My supervisor and I have talked about the importance of keeping good research protocols (i.e., research notes) and have agreed on their form.
- My supervisor and I have talked about the research ethics aspects related to my work, such as the importance of informed consent, and have agreed on how research ethics principles will be ensured in my work.

Data processing and analysis

- My supervisor and I have agreed on the methods of data processing and analysis that I will be using.
- I am aware of factors that might influence objectivity in data analysis, such as various forms of bias or conflicts of interest.
- I am aware that all potential limitations, biases, and conflicts of interest must be clearly declared in my work.
- I am aware of the institutional and legal requirements for properly storing research data and have agreed on how and where my data will be stored.
- I am aware of the possibility of outliers and of why and how they should not be omitted from the dataset.
- If there is a need to anonymize the collected data, I will make codes and do the anonymization before writing.
- It is important to anonymize research participants (if relevant); I will store the anonymization codes in a proper manner.

Academic reading and writing

Academic reading

- I know how to do a literature search and, if not, I know where to get help, for instance, at the university library.
- I use literature sources primarily from the university library or from multidisciplinary or scientific literature databases.
- I use only relevant and reliable scientific sources for my research.
- I have developed a reading list for my research.
- If possible, I use primary sources and avoid secondary sources; if I use secondary sources, I will ensure that I verify facts against the primary sources before writing the thesis.

- I take notes while I am reading and I include complete bibliographic information together with my notes.
- When reading academic texts in my discipline, I pay attention to the form and style of the writing to further develop my own academic writing skills.
- I have read institutional sources and appropriate literature on how to write academic texts.

Ethical work with sources

- I have sufficient knowledge of proper citation (e.g., in-text citations and footnotes) and referencing techniques.
- I have checked what referencing style is used at my institution, or selected a suitable one.
- When writing my academic text, I clearly distinguish between text from sources (e.g., quotations and paraphrased material) and my original writing.
- I have quoted and referred to all sources used and acknowledged any personal communications.
- I have indicated the beginning and end of all direct quotations, and followed them with matching in-text citations or footnotes.
- I have referenced paraphrased or summarised text.
- I have used my own words rather than just replacing the existing words with synonyms when paraphrasing an idea.
- I have properly indicated the sources of all used materials (e.g., pictures, charts, and tables) and I have checked whether I am allowed to use them or whether I need to obtain permission. If I have modified these materials, I have appropriately acknowledged the fact.
- I have properly labelled, numbered, and referenced all used material (e.g., pictures, charts, and tables) and made a special table of contents for them.

Structure, form, and language

- I know what structure (e.g., IMRAD) I will use in my work and have agreed on it with my supervisor.
- In the abstract, I have clearly stated the topic of my work and described the methodology and important results.
- The aim of my thesis and the research questions are clearly stated in the introduction of my thesis.
- My thesis has a clear focus and consistent argumentation, including a clear connection between the research aim, main themes, and overall conclusion.
- I do not include irrelevant information in my work.
- I use the appropriate terminology accurately.
- My conclusion is clearly stated.
- There is consistency between the introduction and the conclusion.
- My language is grammatically correct, clear, and precise.
- I have applied the required formatting in the abstract and/or summary (if applicable), title page, table of contents, page numbering, reference list, table/figure list, list of abbreviations, etc.

When your work is a part of a collaborative research project

- I have discussed, agreed on, and formalised my individual and shared tasks and responsibilities with all the collaborators so that the collaborative work is fair and transparent.
- I have discussed, agreed on, and formalised the relationship between the project and my work in terms of authorship.
- I have discussed, agreed on, and formalised the relationship between the project and my work in terms of data use.
- I have discussed, agreed on, and formalised the relationship between the project and my work in terms of intellectual property rights.
- I have made sure that I have all the ethical approvals required for the study before it begins.

Ethical publishing

- I have checked the potential publisher's requirements.
- I have checked the quality of the journal with the university library and I have discussed predatory publishers with my supervisor. I do understand that work published in such a venue cannot be used as part of my thesis.
- I know what co-authorship means and I have ensured that all co-authors listed in my paper invested some effort in the preparation work.
- I am aware of the importance of only listing all those who have made relevant contributions to the work as authors, as defined by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) and the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).
- I am aware that the authorship order should reflect individuals' respective contributions.
- I am aware that contributors who do not qualify as authors should be properly acknowledged.
- My supervisor and I discussed and agreed on the authors' contributions to the joint article/paper.
- I respect the other authors and put sufficient effort into our common work.
- I am aware of the need to disclose conflicts of interest, if any, and to openly declare them in the publication.
- I am aware that I need to acknowledge research funders.

Final considerations

- I have referenced my sources transparently.
- I have used one reference style consistently.
- I have double-checked whether I have formatted my work as required.
- I have double-checked my bibliography and made sure that it contains all and only the sources cited in my thesis/research paper.
- I have proofread my work.

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