



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

COLLEGE OF ARTS

UNIT OF STUDY GUIDE

AMPC Master of Applied Psychology (Community Psychology)

AMPS Master of Applied Psychology (Sport Psychology)

Thesis Handbook 2015

College of Arts
Victoria University
Melbourne, Australia.

Course Coordinator:

Dr. Julie van den Eynde

Email: julie.vandeneynde@vu.edu.au

Ph. 9919 5221

Room: E410A

We acknowledge the Elders, families and forebears of the Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung tribes of the Kulin Nation who were the custodians of the University land for many centuries.

We acknowledge that the land on which we meet was the place of age-old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal and that the Kulin Nation people's living culture had and has a unique role in the life of this region.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0. Introduction	1
2.0. APAC Guidelines	1
3.0. Master of Applied Psychology (Community & Sport) at Victoria University	2
3.1. Scope.....	2
3.2. Ethics.....	2
3.3. Financial support.....	2
3.4. Suggested research thesis schedule	3
4.0. Preparing your Thesis for Submission	3
4.1. Title page.....	3
4.2. Abstract.....	4
4.3. Declaration of Authenticity.....	4
4.4. Acknowledgements.....	4
4.5. Table of Contents.....	4
4.6. Further Conventions for a Psychology Thesis.....	4
4.6.1. Word limit	4
4.6.2. Format.....	5
4.6.3. Page numbering:.....	5
5.0. Thesis Examination Process	5
6.0. Binding your Thesis	6
7.0. Bookbinders	7
8.0. APPENDIX.....	8
8.1. Research Allowance for Graduate Students	8
8.2. Budget Pro forma.....	10

1.0. INTRODUCTION

This handbook is designed to set out guidelines related to producing the thesis component of the Master of Applied Psychology course, Community Psychology and Sport Psychology. As the course is accredited through the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC), the first section of this document states the APAC (Ver 10 June, 2010) guidelines that set the standards for the thesis component. In line with all applied Master degree programs that have APAC accreditation, the Master of Applied Psychology has an extensive research thesis component. The thesis carries a weighting of 25% of the total grade for the course.

Section 3.0. below explains more details on the Master of Applied Psychology (Sport & Community) thesis component, for example the scope of the thesis, the necessity of gaining ethics approval, financial support etc. Section 4.0 details how to prepare your thesis for examination, and section 5.0 explains the examination process.

2.0. APAC GUIDELINES ¹

The research project should be conducted in an area of relevance to any area of specialisation of the course and must have as its central focus the scientific analysis of a problem.

The research project can be undertaken under supervision as an individual or a group project. As students will have completed a major research project previously, they should be demonstrating greater independence than at the fourth-year level. The project must be designed so that each student is required to undertake all of the steps involved in conducting an empirical investigation or enquiry, including:

- 1) review of the relevant scientific literature;
- 2) the formulation of a research question or questions (or in the case of a literature review and a paper for publication, explication of a model or theoretical proposition);
- 3) the design of an appropriate rigorous scientific method for investigating the question;
- 4) the collection and analysis of data; and
- 5) the interpretation of findings and the preparation of a report.

The research project must take the form of one or more of the following:

- 1) a program evaluation study;
- 2) a study based on experimental single case design;
- 3) a critical review, pilot study and full grant application;
- 4) a critical review and a meta analysis;
- 5) a critical review and secondary data analyses;
- 6) a traditional empirical research project; or
- 7) a literature review and an article suitable for submission to a peer-reviewed international scientific journal

¹ Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) Rules & Accreditation Standards for Psychology Courses Ver 10 June, pp. 57-58

The total length of the project report must be no less than 5000 words. Data collected for the project must be available for inspection by APAC. The research project may be supervised either solely or jointly, but in all cases at least one supervisor must be an academic member of staff from the AOU presenting the course, and at least one supervisor should hold doctoral qualifications.

The final classification of the thesis must be decided by the appropriate Committee or other body within the Institution, based on the examiners' reports

3.0. MASTER OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY (COMMUNITY & SPORT) AT VICTORIA UNIVERSITY

3.1. Scope

The thesis will provide students with experience in planning, conducting, analysing and reporting a major research project in their specialist area - Community or Sport Psychology. The work is to be original research, and it is highly desirable that the topic chosen will be of an applied nature. The thesis component is designed to allow students to demonstrate their grasp of the scientist-practitioner model as it is reflected in their chosen specialist stream. The choices of topic and methods are mainly the responsibility of the student, in consultation with their research supervisor. The thesis is the end product of sustained research and thinking and should clearly indicate the particular theoretical approaches that have informed it.

The thesis for a course work master degree is seen as a significant demonstration of research and professional competence. The thesis will be of the same quality as a master degree by research but the scope will be smaller. It will involve an individual project conducted under supervision equivalent to an Honours standard project but demonstrating greater independence than at fourth-year level. It will be between 12,000 and 18,000 words exclusive of front material (e.g., table of contents, declaration page) and back material (e.g., references, appendices).

3.2. Ethics

All research in the university involving human participants must have the ethics committee approval. Students completing theses as part of a coursework master program are to apply (usually) to the Victoria Human Research Ethics Committee for low or negligible risk studies. In some cases (e.g., working with children or high risk populations), the ethics application will go the University high risk ethics committee directly. The ethics application form is available from the University's research website at <http://research.vu.edu.au/hrec.php>. Ethics applications are to be completed via the Quest website: <http://research.vu.edu.au/quest.php>. The supervisor of the thesis is to be identified as the "chief investigator, and the student as "student investigator".

3.3. Financial support

The College of Arts attempts to provide financial, as well as practical support, for its higher degree students. A pool of money has been allocated to cover some thesis expenses, such as photocopying/printing, tests, postage etc. Students are to prepare and submit a budget at the time of presenting their proposal or ethics application. The proposed budget will need the approval of

supervisor, course coordinator and Head of Psychology. All printing requests should be made via the School Administration staff and *will not be progressed without prior approval within your budget*. The budget form is in the back of this manual.

Students, together with supervisors, need to identify their testing and equipment requirements as early as possible. Supervisors must ensure that existing facilities are appropriate for their students' projects. Supervisors are also responsible for checking that any tests required (including multiple copies of Record Forms/Answer Sheets) are held in the Psychology Test Library or within the Sport Psychology Text Bank. New equipment will not be purchased or built, although there is provision for some materials, such as psychological tests, to be purchased. Answer sheets and questionnaires are considered budget items (see under Budget).

3.4. Suggested research thesis schedule

- 1) Preliminary discussions with potential supervisors and canvassing of appropriate topics.
- 2) **First Semester, Year 1:** End of March: register tentative topic and supervisor with Course Coordinator.
- 3) Rationale and research question to be submitted by end of April.
- 4) **Second Semester, Year 1:** Literature review drafted, methodology outlined and presented to Thesis Research Conference scheduled in or near semester break.
- 5) End of September: Ethics application should be submitted.
- 6) **First Semester, Year 2:** Fieldwork and data collection undertaken.
- 7) **Second Semester, Year 2:** Data analysis and preliminary drafting. Findings presented to Thesis Research Conference scheduled in or near semester break.
- 8) September: First full draft to be submitted to supervisor
- 9) End of October: Submit three ring-bound copies for examination.

4.0. PREPARING YOUR THESIS FOR SUBMISSION ²

The thesis needs to be presented in a particular order, i.e., Title page, Abstract, Declaration of Authenticity, Acknowledgments, and then a Table of Contents. More detail is provided below.

4.1. Title page

The thesis you submit for examination must contain a title page with the information provided and in the order indicated below.

² See: <http://www.vu.edu.au/research/postgraduate-research/thesis-submission/preparing-your-thesis>

- 1) Title of the thesis. The title should be a clear description of the research project on the spine of the thesis when it is bound. It should contain no more than 150 characters and should be in sentence case with only the first letter of the significant words capitalised.
- 2) Student's full name.
- 3) Name of the College in which the research is carried out, i.e., College of Arts
- 4) The following statement – “Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Applied Psychology (Insert either Community Psychology OR Sport Psychology)”
- 5) Year of submission.

4.2. Abstract

Your thesis must contain a 300-word abstract summarising the following:

- 1) context and purpose of the research project
- 2) method of analysis used
- 3) major conclusions reached

4.3. Declaration of Authenticity

Each copy of your thesis submitted for examination must contain a Student Declaration of Authenticity. This should be inserted after the title page and abstract, and before the table of contents. The Declaration of Authenticity statement is as follows

I, [insert student name], declare that the Master thesis titled [insert title of the thesis] contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

Signature:

Date

4.4. Acknowledgements

In this space, the student can make a personal note of thanks to the people who supported the student throughout the production of the thesis.

4.5. Table of Contents

Your thesis must include a detailed Table of Contents, listing all chapters, references, appendices etc.

4.6. Further Conventions for a Psychology Thesis

4.6.1. Word limit

The word limit includes quotes, but excludes tables, figures, appendices, references and footnotes. Thesis must adhere to a length of 12,000 to 18,000 words.

4.6.2. Format

Thesis must comply with APA (6th) Publication Manual.

Your thesis must be:

- 1) printed with A4 paper, single sided
- 2) Font: 12 font in Times New Roman
- 3) Line Spacing: Double space everything (2.0), including title, headings, footnotes, quotations, references and figure captions. You can use single spacing or one and a half spacing in tables and figures (see section 8.03 APA [6th] Publication Manual)
- 4) Text: Text must be 'Align Text left' throughout the thesis.
- 5) Running Headers need to be included (see section 8.03 APA [6th] Publication Manual).
- 6) Levels of Headings need to be constructed correctly – see 3.03 in APA (6th) Publication Manual.

4.6.3. Page numbering:

- 1) Lower case Roman Numerals need to be used, from the Abstract page up to the page before the start of Chapter 1 (i, ii, iii, iv etc.). These need to be formatted at the bottom of the page, and centred.
- 2) The front title page of the thesis does not have a page number.
- 3) From Chapter 1 onwards, revert to regular numbering (1, 2, 3, 4 etc.) and locate these numbers on the bottom right hand corner of the page.

5.0. THESIS EXAMINATION PROCESS

When the supervisor is satisfied the thesis is at sufficient standard to submit for examination, the student prepares three copies of the thesis, with ring binding, and submits these for examination. Thesis should be submitted to the administration officers in E414 (Bldg E, Level 4 Room 14) Footscray Park campus.

The thesis will be examined independently by two examiners, one of whom is internal and one of whom is external to the university. Students will not know the identity of the Examiners.

Each Examiner will assess the thesis and recommend **one** of the following:

- 1) The thesis should be passed without amendment, and will be awarded a mark and a grade.
- 2) The thesis requires minor revisions and/or corrections detailed in the Examiner's comments. The Examiner awards a mark and a grade subject to the completion of the minor revisions and/or corrections. After these have been completed to the satisfaction of the candidate's supervisor, the thesis may be passed.
- 3) The thesis should not be passed, but the candidate should be permitted to re-submit it in a revised form.
- 4) The thesis should be failed.

Key to Victoria University Grades:		
First Class Honours:	H1	80 – 100%
Second Class Honours – level A:	H2A	70 – 79%
Second Class Honours – level B:	H2B	60 – 69%
Third Class Honours:	H3	50 – 59%

Each Examiner will award the thesis a grade and a numerical mark. Examiners will write a short report that outlines the thesis strengths and weaknesses and provide a rationale for the grade awarded.

Where there are major discrepancies between grades, these will be resolved by the Examiners' Board, normally consisting of the Program Coordinator, Head of Psychology and one other staff member external to the program. In some cases, the thesis may be sent to a third examiner.

When the Examiners reports are finalised, the student will receive a letter from the Course Coordinator that reports on the Examiners' recommendations, and provides copies of the Examiners' reports. If the Examiners recommend minor revisions and/or corrections, the student will be instructed to attend to these amendments, in consultation with the student's supervisor.

When the student has made the recommend corrections, the supervisor will send a Memo to the Course Coordinator, explaining how the amendments have been addressed. Then the student can submit one hard-bound copy of the amended thesis to the Thesis Coordinator. It is also a convention that the student provides another copy for the supervisor.

6.0. BINDING YOUR THESIS

Question 1: What information is printed on the front of the thesis?

Answer: Title of the thesis, Name of Student, Title of degree, Name of University, Year

Question 2: What information is printed on the binder of the thesis?

Answer: Name of Student, Year, Title of thesis

Question 3: What colour should the thesis be bound in?

Answer: Students may choose.

Question 4: What colour should the text be on the binding?

Answer: Students may choose

Question 5: How do I abbreviate AMPS Master of Applied Psychology (Sport Psychology), or AMPC Master of Applied Psychology (Community Psychology)

Answer: MAppPsych (Community or Sport)

7.0. BOOKBINDERS

Doncaster Bookbinders
33 Ebdon St
Moorabbin
Ph: 9555 4633
Prompt Thesis Binding
Kilsyth
Ph: 0431 693 093

A G Bookbinders
25 Stanley Street
West Melbourne
Ph: 9329 0288

Apollo-Moon Bookbinders
7 Macro Crt
Rowville
Ph: 9763 2299

Irwin & McLean
64 Cubitt Street
Richmond
Ph: 9428 5829

Whites Law Bindery
802-804 Glenhuntly Road
Caulfield South
Ph: 9523 6026

Scribe Bookbinding
743 Drummond Street
Carlton North
Ph: 9347 0039

Alternatively, you can search the Yellow Pages under “bookbinders”.

8.0. APPENDIX

8.1 Research Allowance for Graduate Students

Policy and Procedures

Enrolled students may apply for some limited reimbursement of their costs associated with their field research. Please note that this is not an entitlement; rather, it is an allowance to cover certain legitimate costs incurred. The following maximum reimbursements apply across the entire duration of their course:

M. Applied Psych	\$400
------------------	-------

Reimbursements are only permitted for the following items:

- 1) Purchase of questionnaires or test consumables. **Note:** Where a student is ordering a new test (not currently held in the College Test Library or the Sport Psychology Test Bank), this cost does not need to be included within the budget limits. All such tests will initially go to the Test Library or Test Bank, and then the student can borrow the test for the duration of the project. The test is to be returned upon completion of the project.
- 2) Cost of specialised consumables (e.g., cassette tapes, biochemical assays, paper for sleep lab etc.).
- 3) Purchase of specialist equipment (this becomes the property of the College upon completion).
- 4) Photocopying of materials for distribution such as questionnaires. The Print Room must be used for this unless the student has a research photocopying number.
- 5) Cost of mail-outs and reply-paid envelopes.
- 6) Some limited costs for transcribing interviews, where these form the bulk of the data collection.

Reimbursements are **not** permitted for the following items:

- 1) Local travel.
- 2) Conference expenditure.
- 3) Participation in training programs.
- 4) Cost of thesis binding.
- 5) Payment of participants

Where variations to this policy are sought, they must be individually approved by the Head of Psychology.

The procedure for research allowances in the Master of Applied Psychology courses is as follows:

- 1) When the student's research project design is finalised, a draft budget will be submitted to the supervisor.
- 2) Upon approval by the supervisor, this will be forwarded to the course co-ordinator.

- 3) The course co-ordinator for coursework subjects will collate these draft budgets and submit them, with their own recommendations, to the Head of Psychology for approval. This approval must be sought prior to expenditures.
- 4) Once a budget has been approved, claims for reimbursement may be made directly to the Head of Psychology. Where there is any doubt about whether a claim has formed a part of the approved budget, the claim will be referred to the course co-ordinator for verification.

8.2. Budget Pro forma

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF ARTS
MASTER OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY (COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY AND SPORT PSYCHOLOGY)
ESTIMATED BUDGET FOR RESEARCH PROJECT

DETAILS	COST \$

TOTAL

STUDENT NAME		Signature	Date
RESEARCH SUPERVISOR		Signature	Date
COORDINATOR OF COURSE		Signature	Date
HEAD OF PSYCHOLOGY		Signature	Date
APPROVED		Signature	Date