

Structure of a Conventional Doctoral Thesis at UPCT ¹

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This guide aims to establish the formal structure of a Doctoral Thesis at the Technical University of Cartagena (UPCT) in its conventional format (not by compilation of publications). It is based on providing a clear, orderly and homogeneous model that facilitates preparation and subsequent dissemination. Therefore, the document should include the usual sections of a Doctoral Thesis, organized in the order detailed below, thus ensuring consistency and standardization in presentation. This criterion is especially relevant because theses will be deposited and published in the UPCT institutional repository, making it essential to ensure formal uniformity of structure that contributes to the quality, accessibility and visibility of the academic works representing our institution. Although the structure may vary depending on the type of thesis, the following fundamental sections should be included in the established order; some are mandatory and others optional. For any questions, consult EINDOC.

STRUCTURE FOR CONVENTIONAL THESES AT UPCT	
Cover Page	It is <u>mandatory</u> to use the standardized cover page for Thesis developed at UPCT. If written in English, the thesis must contain two cover pages: the first in Spanish and the second in English. The standard CC license must follow.
Acknowledgements	Add personal acknowledgements. Optional.
Table of Contents	<u>Mandatory</u> . Organized by sections (numbered where appropriate) and page numbers. It must contain direct links to the content. This will be the first numbered page, and page numbering must then remain consistent.
Lists of Figures, Tables, etc.	Recommended for easier content location within the manuscript. Direct links should be provided.
Resumen (Spanish)	<u>Mandatory</u> . Spanish abstract of maximum one page (approximately 400 words). Translation of the English abstract.
Abstract (English)	Mandatory. English abstract of maximum one page (approximately 400 words). Briefly include introduction, objectives, methodology, main results, conclusions and relevance. Do not include keywords.
List of Abbreviations / Glossary	Optional. Recommended when many abbreviations are used.
1. Introduction / State of the Art / Theoretical Framework / Context / Background / etc	A clearly defined introductory section is <u>mandatory</u> , presenting the central topic of the Thesis, its purpose, the research problem, and its context, while indicating its relevance and applicability to a specific professional or disciplinary field. This section should include an analysis and exposition of the theoretical background related to the thesis topic, describing the current state of knowledge, its development within the

¹ Extracted and adapted from several sources, especially from:

<https://www.ub.edu/portal/documents/1042830/6479764/Gu%C3%ADaEst%C3%ADoDoctoradoCast.pdf/8b21516d-b57e-a1aa-4aee-434f64d2a722>
<https://www.vitae.ac.uk/doing-research/doing-a-doctorate/completing-your-doctorate/writing-and-submitting-your-doctoral-thesis/structuring-your-thesis>

	relevant scientific field, and the key aspects and variables that underpin and justify the study. The section may be titled as deemed appropriate, provided that its introductory nature is clearly evident, and it may be divided into several chapters or sections. It may also include subsections such as motivation, thesis structure, and related introductory elements. Numbering should begin in this section, using either Arabic or Roman numerals, and any subsections should likewise be numbered. From this point onward, all subsequent sections and subsections should follow a continuous and consecutive numbering scheme unless otherwise specified.
2. Objectives	This section should specify the aims and intended outcomes of the doctoral thesis, namely what the research seeks to achieve and what will subsequently be addressed and evaluated in the Results and Conclusions sections. The objectives should be clear, specific, and feasible. It is recommended that they be structured into a general objective for the Thesis and a set of specific objectives. The objectives <u>must be clearly identifiable</u> and easy to locate, either in a dedicated section immediately following the Introduction (preferred) or as a subsection within the introductory chapter.
3. Materials and Methods / Research Methodology / etc	This section should describe the methodology and development of the research, including the definition and conceptualization of the methodological foundations of the study and the methods employed. It should also provide a detailed justification and explanation of the processes and stages carried out throughout the research. The methodology may be presented separately within each results chapter <u>if different methods are used in each case</u> . However, when a substantial part of the methodology is common to all chapters, it must be presented in a dedicated section of its own.
4. Results	This section should present the analysis, design, implementation, and interpretation of the research findings. It constitutes the main body of the Thesis. Although it may draw upon previously published results, the work must maintain a coherent and unified narrative rather than merely assembling a collection of individual studies, as this format does not constitute a thesis by compilation of publications. The section <u>must include</u> both the description and interpretation of the information derived from the empirical component of the research.
5. Discussion	A critical interpretation of the results obtained is mandatory, placing them within the context of existing scientific knowledge. This section should go beyond merely describing the data; it should analyze their implications, compare them with findings from other relevant studies, and provide evidence-based explanations for the observed phenomena.

	It enables an assessment of the extent to which the stated objectives and hypotheses have been achieved, the identification of potential study limitations, and the highlighting of the main scientific contributions. This section must demonstrate the researcher's ability to integrate results, develop independent reasoning, and generate knowledge within their area of expertise. It may be combined with the Results section under the heading 'Results and Discussion'. If individual results chapters conclude with conclusions, these should be titled 'Conclusions of this Chapter' to distinguish them from the overall conclusions of the Thesis.
6. Conclusions (and Future Work if applicable)	This section <u>must</u> provide a concise synthesis of the principal research findings and their significance, clearly indicating the extent to which the stated objectives have been achieved and the proposed hypotheses have been tested. It should not introduce new information, but rather emphasize the most relevant contributions of the work, its scientific value, and, where appropriate, its practical implications. In addition, it may briefly identify the study's limitations and suggest potential directions for future research.
Institutional Acknowledgements	Optional. If required, logos may be included at the request of the funding body. This section should not be numbered.
Publications Derived from the Doctoral Thesis	This section should provide a compilation of scientific contributions arising from the doctoral research. Only works that have already been published and are directly derived from this Doctoral Thesis should be included. The DOI and, where applicable, the handle identifier should be provided (if considered part of the quality indicators). Contributions should be classified into the following categories: Scientific articles published in journals indexed in the JCR/SJR of the SCI, Scientific articles published in journals not indexed in the JCR/SJR of the SCI, International conferences, National conferences, Patents, Research stays, Participation in science communication and outreach events, and Research awards. This section should not be numbered.
References	This section should provide a formal listing of all documentary and bibliographic sources cited within the body of the doctoral thesis. The term "References" should be used instead of "Bibliography." Any referencing style may be adopted, provided that all entries contain sufficient information for accurate identification and that the chosen style is applied consistently throughout. This section should not be numbered.
Appendices	This section should consist of a carefully compiled and justified collection of materials that do not form part of the core body of the thesis but provide supplementary information that may help to clarify, support, and elaborate on the ideas developed

throughout the work. Appendices may include, for example, data collected during fieldwork, letters and circulars used in the study, research instruments and protocols, evidence of data analysis, and other relevant supporting documentation. This section should not be numbered.