

## **Physiotherapy minor thesis handbook**

Master of Applied Science in Physiotherapy  
School of Physiotherapy, 1996, amended 1997  
Ruth Grant, amended by Karen Grimmer

This publication is distributed to postgraduate students in certain courses, and may also be available through the School of Physiotherapy by negotiation. It contains a comprehensive set of detailed requirements for the presentation of a minor thesis in this School.

The following excerpts can be accessed in full by clicking on the items below.

**Assessment of the literature review (physiotherapy)**  
**Placing your research study into a conceptual framework**

## **Assessment of the literature review (physiotherapy)**

*A literature review is required as the assessable component for the subject Physiotherapy Minor Theses 1G.*

*This report comprises all of the theoretical chapters of the postgraduate student's thesis, as well as an Introduction chapter. The submission is assessed by one examiner who is not the student's supervisor.*

*The following comprises all of the information given to the examiner (assessor) to assist him or her in the task of examining the Literature Review submission. It is included in its entirety to assist the postgraduate student in the preparation of the Literature Review submission.*

### **Literature review Advice to assessors**

#### **Background**

The Literature review comprises all of the theoretical chapters of the postgraduate student's thesis. It should be in the same format from a typewritten presentational point of view, as the final thesis. It should comprise a:

- Title Page (sample attached to original handbook)
- Table of contents
- List of tables
- List of figures
- Introduction chapter of no more than 1,000 words
- Literature review chapters appropriately titled of no more than 5,000 words

The formal presentation of what is in effect a major part of the thesis prior to its final presentation, has a number of real advantages for the postgraduate student.

- A succinct review of the literature relevant to the thesis topic occurs concurrently with data collection
- opportunity for postgraduate students to experience the rigours of written scientific communication before the presentation of the entire thesis in final form
- opportunity for assessors to provide postgraduate students with feedback in areas requiring improvement and to commend them in areas that are satisfactory or excellent

*(Please note that a copy of the student's research protocol application to the University of South Australia Human Research Ethics Committee is included with the Literature Review. It is for information only. It is not to form part of the documentation for assessment. It is provided to give the assessor a brief overview of the methodology proposed).*

#### **Guide to assessment**

The following assessment breakdown should be used as a GENERAL GUIDE to assist you in establishing the grade and percentage for the Literature Review (if you do not wish to assign a

percentage then a percentage will be assigned to the grade you give using established University procedure).

Annotations directly onto the submitted work are quite acceptable.

**Presentation** **20%**  
Includes format, quality of presentation, accuracy of referencing, clarity of figures and tables, number of typographical errors, general organisation of material.

**Introduction chapter** **15%**  
Introduces research topic in a suitable context, places the research to be carried out in a conceptual framework; includes aims and research hypotheses. Note: hypotheses may be omitted if inappropriate to the type of research to be carried out.

**Literature review chapters** **65%**  
Consider content, clarity, cohesiveness, critical evaluation. See notes attached under General Guidelines

#### General guidelines

Writing well, as we all know, is probably the most challenging part of undertaking research. Do commend the student's work where possible, as well as giving constructive criticism and highlighting errors.

May I suggest the following method to tackle this task. First, read the whole Literature Review fairly quickly, noting in pencil on the submitted work obvious good and not so good aspects, errors and omissions as you go along. Second, re-read carefully and slowly making more notations, then prepare the report.

A copy of the Physiotherapy Minor Theses Handbook has already been given to you, or is included with this information. The sections on Checklist and Referencing Style should be perused prior to assessment.

THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF A BRIEF TYPEWRITTEN REPORT ON THE FORM PROVIDED PLUS RETURN OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW SUBMISSION TO PROFESSOR RUTH GRANT IS .....

#### YOUR REPORT SHOULD REFLECT THE GRADE ASSIGNED

In assessing the Literature Review Submission the following general guidelines are given.

#### **Presentation**

- 6,000 words maximum (Introduction and Literature Review) (**marks will be deducted for submissions in excess of this maximum**)
- maximum 30 recent references
- neatly typed
- well set out
- few typographical errors

- few author citation errors (in text and in references)
- Figures and Tables if used, well set out, with a key as necessary, and referred to in the text
- correct use of single and double/triple digit numerals
- correct use of abbreviations

### **Literary construction**

- easy to read
- avoidance of jargon or unsophisticated expression

### **Introduction**

- a required chapter
- should introduce the topic to be researched in a suitable context and in such a way that it captures the reader's interest in the study which is to follow; should place the study into a conceptual framework
- must include aims (and hypotheses) of the research report

### **Literature review chapters**

- titles of these chapters should be applied in nature, not generic (ie not "Anatomy and Biomechanics" but "Biomechanics of Lumbar Sagittal Mobility")
- if the chapter is limited to certain aspects of the literature reviewed, this should be clear to the reader
- consider the chapter content in the light of the chapter title and particularly the introductory and summary statements
- does the student appear to have been both discriminating and critical in the literature reviewed?
- consider the cohesiveness of the chapter or its sections, ie, is it a series of findings by authors simply strung together?

### **References**

- correct citation
- cite references published within the last 5-7 years (unless there is an earlier benchmark article which underpins all the more recent references).
- check that all authors cited in the text are included in the references and vice versa

## Placing your research study into a conceptual framework

Placing your research study into a conceptual framework is more than just giving a brief review of the literature and then stating where your study fits in. It should be quite clear how the purpose and aims of the study emerge out of the background. This is vital for the following

- the research application to the Human Research Ethics Committee
- the Introduction both to your Literature Review and the final thesis
- the paper you are going to present either at a conference or for publication

The following example illustrates what is desired (presented here in brief note form without references)

### Project title

*The incidence of abnormal upper limb tension test responses in subjects with Colles' Fractures.*

### Introduction (or background)

- ULTT first described by whom, when
- Said to exert longitudinal traction on cervical nerves and peripheral nerves
- Test involves three component movements - described
- Test commonly used in physiotherapy to implicate involvement of neural structures in relation to shoulder and arm pain
- Colles' fracture - one of the most common, often occurs in elderly women
- Fracture frequently caused by a fall on the outstretched hand
- Postulated that a fall on the outstretched hand may transmit a stretch to the peripheral nerves and cervical nerve roots
- Position of the arm in the fall usually consists of several or all of the component movements of the ULTT test potentially considerable tension on the neural structures
- In hyperextension of the wrist, median nerve must slide 10-15mm, such stretch and sliding effects transmitted proximally
- Thus applying the ULTT in Colles' fracture patients may help to clarify the origin of their symptoms
- Further shoulder pain and stiffness which is a common complication post Colles' fracture may be partially explained

The purpose (or aim) of the study therefore is to compare the responses to the Upper Limb Tension Test (ULTT) in a group of patients who have suffered a Colles' fracture with those elicited in a matched control group.

The research hypotheses are as follows. In the presence of a neural component to the symptoms experienced by post Colles' fracture patients:-

**Hypothesis 1** - There will be a significant reduction in the range of elbow extension of the affected arm in the Colles' fracture group when compared with the control group upon the application of the ULTT

**Hypothesis 2** - The intensity of the pain provoked by wrist extension applied with the affected arm by the side in the Colles' fracture group, will increase when the affected arm is placed in the ULTT position with the wrist position held constant

**Hypothesis 3** - The shoulder pain experienced by Colles' fracture patients if present, will be reproduced at the limit of the ULTT position

**Hypothesis 4** - The intensity of the shoulder pain experienced by the Colles' fracture patients at the limit of the ULTT position will be reduced when wrist extension is released.

