Thesis Submission Checklist: 50 Items Before You Submit

Work through the six sections in order during the final two weeks before submission. Tick an item only after checking it against your own university's regulations and your supervisor's instructions, which take precedence over any general list. Sections A, B and F are where most last-minute failures happen.

A. Regulations, deadlines and forms

#	Item	Done
1	Read the current edition of your thesis regulations and the program handbook; note the exact submission date and time (many portals close at noon).	☐
2	Confirm the word limit and exactly what it includes and excludes (footnotes, references, appendices).	☐
3	Confirm the required file format (PDF or PDF/A), the maximum file size and any file-naming rule.	☐
4	Submit any notice of intention to submit, or the submission form itself, by its own earlier deadline.	☐
5	Obtain your supervisor's agreement or sign-off to submit, where the regulations require it.	☐
6	Check whether a similarity report (Turnitin or equivalent) must accompany the thesis and how it is generated.	☐
7	Confirm whether printed or bound copies are still required, how many, and where they go.	☐

B. Front matter

#	Item	Done
8	Title page shows the title, your full name, the degree, the department or school, the university and the month and year, in the order your regulations prescribe.	☐
9	The title is identical in the thesis file, the submission portal and every form.	☐
10	Abstract is within the limit (often 250 to 300 words), sits on its own page and states aim, methods, main findings and contribution.	☐
11	Declaration of originality uses the exact wording required and is signed and dated.	☐
12	Any previously published or co-authored material is declared with full references.	☐
13	Acknowledgements are present or deliberately omitted and contain no personal data about third parties without consent.	☐
14	Table of contents is generated automatically and its page numbers match the text.	☐
15	Lists of tables, figures and abbreviations are complete and in order of appearance.	☐
16	The ethics approval reference and date appear in the front matter or the methodology chapter.	☐
17	The word count is stated where the regulations require it.	☐

C. Formatting

#	Item	Done
18	Page size, margins, font, font size and line spacing match the regulations throughout.	☐
19	Page numbers run continuously; roman numerals are used for the front matter only if the regulations ask for them.	☐
20	Headings follow one hierarchy of at most three or four levels and match the table of contents exactly.	☐
21	Every table has a numbered title above it and every figure a numbered caption below it.	☐
22	Every table and figure is mentioned in the text before it appears.	☐
23	Headers and footers contain no personal data (name, student number) unless required.	☐
24	No heading is stranded at the bottom of a page and there are no blank pages.	☐
25	Equations are numbered and every symbol is defined at first use.	☐
26	Appendices are lettered, listed in the contents and each is referred to in the text.	☐
27	Spelling (US or UK) and key terms are consistent across all chapters.	☐

D. Content checks

#	Item	Done
28	The research questions in chapter 1 are the ones answered in the results and conclusions, word for word.	☐
29	Every hypothesis has a reported outcome (supported or not supported).	☐
30	Population, sampling method, sample size, response rate and exclusions are reported.	☐
31	Each statistical result gives the test statistic, degrees of freedom, p-value and effect size.	☐
32	Qualitative findings are supported by extracts labeled with pseudonyms or codes, never real names.	☐
33	A limitations section is present and honest about what the design cannot show.	☐
34	The conclusion introduces no new results and no new literature.	☐
35	Recommendations follow from the findings and are addressed to named audiences.	☐

E. References and academic integrity

#	Item	Done
36	Every in-text citation appears in the reference list and every reference is cited in the text.	☐
37	One citation style (APA 7, Harvard, Vancouver, IEEE or Chicago) is applied consistently.	☐
38	DOIs and URLs are correct, live and formatted as the style requires.	☐
39	Quotations are exact, with page numbers; paraphrases are attributed to their source.	☐
40	The similarity report has been reviewed and high-similarity passages revised or correctly quoted.	☐
41	Any use of AI tools is disclosed in the form your regulations require.	☐
42	Permission has been obtained for reproduced figures, tables, images or instruments.	☐

F. Final file and upload

#	Item	Done
43	A final spell-check and a read-aloud pass have been completed on the whole document.	☐
44	All tracked changes are accepted and all comments deleted.	☐
45	File properties (title, author) are set and contain nothing you do not want published.	☐
46	The PDF (or PDF/A) was exported from the source file, with fonts embedded, links working and no password.	☐
47	The final file opens correctly on a different device; the page count and all figures are intact.	☐
48	The file name follows the required pattern.	☐
49	The file was uploaded before the deadline and the confirmation email or receipt is saved.	☐
50	Backup copies of the final PDF and the source files are stored in two separate places.	☐

> **Three checks that catch most last-minute failures:** (1) open the final PDF on a different device and scroll through every page; (2) compare the research questions in chapter 1 with the conclusions, word for word; (3) upload at least 24 hours before the deadline and keep the confirmation.

Prepared by the Mastermind PhD team · October 2026 · General educational guidance that does not replace your university regulations or your supervisor's instructions · Companion article: Thesis Submission Checklist on mastermindphd.com · Thesis & Research Formatting service: https://mastermindphd.com/thesis-formatting/