

THE BEST MARGINS FOR THESESES, RESEARCH PROJECT REPORTS AND ESSAYS FOR COMPLETION OF DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Margins are the #1 flaw that blocks approval for publication of a thesis, research report or extended essays.

It is also the single most costly error for a student, involving re-printing and copying of all sets of the thesis/project/ pages in order to correct the error (200 pages x 10¢/page x 5 sets = \$100.00).

The SFU Library requires that students use the following margins for all sections of the electronic document used to create all theses and research reports.

Location	Inches	Metric
Left	1.50 in.	3.8 cm
Right	1.00 in.	2.5 cm
Top	1.00 in.	2.5 cm
Bottom	1.00 in.	2.5 cm
Page numbers and running heads:	Min. 0.6 in	Min. 1.5 cm from edge(s) of paper

Reasons:

1. These are the National Library of Canada standards for microfiche and pdf document production to prevent cutting off of text in production.
2. The generous left margin prevents the spine of your thesis from being broken when others, attempting to access your scholarship, squash your book on the photocopier.
3. Margin for error: While there are minimum margins allowable in the final printed edition, these wider margins in the electronic document allow you to achieve those margins with less stress. They protect you from hazards which are impossible for you to control when meeting your final deadline, including the cumulative effects of:
 - Microsoft Word's placement of all borders outside the margins (see above table).
 - Importation of figures, graphs and tables from other programs.
 - Importation of previous documents with difficult formatting (such as questionnaires) into the Appendices.
 - Printer "image shift" moving the entire text to the left.
 - Additional photocopier "image shift" moving entire text to the left.

Precautions to take:

1. Configure page setup in other programs, such as Excel, Photoshop or graphics programs, to conform to these standards also.
2. Check **each and every** section of the document to ensure that preliminary section, main body section, landscape-oriented pages, appendices and reference sections all have sufficient margins.

3. In File/Page Setup/, check not only the margins, but also Page Layout/Headers and Footers/From Edge: .75 inch/2 cm.

If your document is too long:

If you find these margins make your thesis too long, do not adjust these margins. Try these changes instead, which are all permitted under the regulations governing theses.

Format of:	Change to:
Paragraph line spacing	1.5 line spacing: a 25% saving
Font style	a more condensed font, such as Times Roman instead of Bookman, or Arial instead of Tahoma
Font size	Small size, such as 11 point font, but no smaller in condensed fonts such as Times Roman or less than 12 pt in Garmond 10 point font is acceptable in Bookman or Verdana, but in few others. Font size reduction by 1 point gives 8% saving in space.
Headings and sub-headings	Less space before or after. Ensure they are closer to the following text than to the preceding text.
Block quotes	single spaced with line before and after
References	single spaced, hanging indents, with one line between
Tables,	Change to Arial or Arial Narrow, and reduce to 11 pr 10 pt font.
Numbered and bullet paragraphs	single spaced with a line between.
Figure and Table Captions	single spaced, with 3 pts space before and after
Tables of Contents, Lists of Figures and Lists of Tables	less than double spaced. Main TOC style can retain greater spacing (6 pts before, 3 pts after) , while lower level TOC styles can be single spaced.

If these margins don't serve other purposes:

You may wish to have equal margins in your working documents, and your academic supervisor may wish for a wider right margin to facilitate comments. If you are printing two-sided at the draft stage, you may wish to alternate margins. No problem.

- As long as the sum of the left and right margin is 2.5 inches, or 6.3 cm, then it is easy to re-format margin requirements for different purposes. Your page layout will not change if .25 or .50 inch is merely moved from the right side to the left, or vice versa.
- For two-sided printing, see File/Page Setup/Multiple Pages/ Choose "Mirror Margins." Note that final editions for submission must be single spaced.

Caution:

Always ensure that the margins are re-adjusted to the correct 1.5 in (3.8 cm) on the left, and 1 inch (2.5 cm), and the printing re-adjusted to one-sided for the final edition of your thesis/research report for binding.