THESIS AND ACADEMIC JOURNAL WRITING

What is thesis and academic journal?

Why they are important?

What is UTM’s regulation on thesis and academic journal?

What is conference paper?

Do thesis submission would guaranteed my graduation?
"The distinguishing mark of graduate research is an original contribution to knowledge. The thesis is a formal document whose sole purpose is to prove that you have made an original contribution to knowledge. Failure to prove that you have made such a contribution generally leads to failure."

(Chinneck, 1999)
FEATURES IN ACADEMIC WRITING

Complexity

Written language is relatively more complex than spoken language.

Written texts are lexically dense compared to spoken language - they have proportionately more lexical words than grammatical words. Written texts are shorter and have longer, more complex words and phrases. They have more noun-based phrases, more nominalisations, and more lexical variation.
Written language is grammatically more complex than spoken language. It has more subordinate clauses, more "that/to" complement clauses, more long sequences of prepositional phrases, more attributive adjectives and more passives than spoken language.

The following features are common in academic written texts: Noun-based phrases, Subordinate clauses/embedding, Complement clauses, Sequences of prepositional phrases, Participles, Passive verbs, Lexical density, Lexical complexity, Nominalisation, Attributive adjectives.
Formality

In general this means in an essay that you should avoid:

- Colloquial words and expressions; ""stuff", "a lot of", "thing", "sort of",
- Abbreviated forms: "can't", "doesn't", "shouldn't"
- Two word verbs: "put off", "bring up"
- Sub-headings, numbering and bullet-points in formal essays - but use them in reports.
- Asking questions.
**Precision**

In academic writing you need to be precise when you use information, dates or figures.

Do not use "a lot of people" when you can say "50 million people".

For example:
The volatile oily liquid beta-chloro-beta-ethyl sulphide was first synthesized in 1854, and in 1887 it was reported to produce blisters if it touched the skin. It was called mustard gas and was used at Moscow in 1917, when it caused many thousands of casualties.
Objectivity

This means that the main emphasis should be on the information that you want to give and the arguments you want to make, rather than you.

This is related to the basic nature of academic study and academic writing, in particular. Nobody really wants to know what you "think" or "believe".

They want to know what you have studied and learned and how this has led you to your various conclusions. The thoughts and beliefs should be based on your lectures, reading, discussion and research and it is important to make this clear.
In general, avoid words like "I", "me", "myself". A reader will normally assume that any idea not referenced is your own. It is therefore unnecessary to make this explicit.

Don't write: "In my opinion, this a very interesting study." Write: "This is a very interesting study."

Avoid "you" to refer to the reader or people in general. Don't write: "You can easily forget how different life was 50 years ago." Write: "It is easy to forget how difficult life was 50 years ago."
Explicitness

It is explicit in its signposting of the organisation of the ideas in the text (Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad & Finegan, 1999, pp. 880-882).

As a writer of academic English, it is your responsibility to make it clear to your reader how various parts of the text are related.

These connections can be made explicit by the use of different signalling words.
It is explicit in its acknowledgment of the sources of the ideas in the text. If you know the source of the ideas you are presenting, acknowledge it.

Do THIS in academic writing:

McGreil (1977: 363-408) has shown that though Dubliners find the English more acceptable than the Northern Irish, Dubliners still seek a solution to the Northern problem within an all-Ireland state.
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Researchers have shown that though Dubliners find the English more acceptable than the Northern Irish, Dubliners still seek a solution to the Northern problem within an all-Ireland state.
Signalling

It is the responsibility of the writer in English to make it clear to the reader how various parts of the paragraph are connected. These connections can be made explicit by the use of different signalling words.

See “10 signaling.pdf” for reference.
Accuracy

In academic writing you need to be accurate in your use of vocabulary.

Do not confuse, for example,

"phonetics" and "phonology" or "grammar" with "syntax".

"meeting", "assembly" , "gathering" or "conference".

"money", "cash", "currency", "capital" or "funds".
Hedging

It is often believed that academic writing, particularly scientific writing, is factual, simply to convey facts and information.

However it is now recognized that an important feature of academic writing is the concept of cautious language, often called "hedging" or "vague language".

In other words, it is necessary to make decisions about your stance on a particular subject, or the strength of the claims you are making. Different subjects prefer to do this in different ways.
Language used in hedging:

1. Introductory verbs: e.g. seem, tend, look like, appear to be, think, believe, doubt, be sure, indicate, suggest

2. Certain lexical verbs
   e.g. believe, assume, suggest

3. Certain modal verbs:
   e.g. will, must, would, may, might, could

4. Adverbs of frequency
   e.g. often, sometimes, usually
5. Modal adverbs
  e.g. certainly, definitely, clearly, probably, possibly, perhaps, conceivably,

6. Modal adjectives
  e.g. certain, definite, clear, probable, possible

7. Modal nouns
  e.g. assumption, possibility, probability

8. That clauses
  e.g. It could be the case that.
  e.g. It might be suggested that.
  e.g. There is every hope that.
9. To-clause + adjective
  e.g. It may be possible to obtain .
  e.g. It is important to develop .
  e.g. It is useful to study .
Responsibility

In academic writing you are responsible for demonstrating an understanding of the source text.

You must also be responsible for, and must be able to provide evidence and justification for, any claims you make.

This is done by paraphrasing and summarizing what you read and acknowledging the source of this information or ideas by a system of citation.
Common essay mistakes

You should not use:

short forms (e.g. I'm, It’s) except when these are part of a quotation

colloquial expressions, phrasal verbs, idioms (e.g. lots of, put up with, be over the moon about…)

simplistic vocabulary (e.g. Experts say they think this is bad….)

a series of short sentences (e.g. Many people think so. They are wrong.)
simple linking words (e.g. and, but, so) except for variety

use very emotional language (e.g. I absolutely detest people who…)

express personal opinions too strongly (e.g. I know…); instead, use milder expressions (e.g. It seems to me that…)

use over-generalisation (e.g. All politicians are…)

refer blindly to statistics without accurate reference to their source (e.g. "A recent study showed…" - which study?)
use cliches (e.g. Rome was not built in a day.)

use personal examples (e.g. In my school...