

THESIS GUIDE

Policies and Procedures
for the Preparation of the
Master's Thesis



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The Master's Thesis

The thesis should be an independent and original study. Although it can treat a subject considered in the past, it should treat the subject in an original way. The thesis is derived from original research, i.e., laboratory, field, or library, and must be prepared under the guidance of a Thesis Director and Advisory Committee. The thesis must be acceptable in both content and expression, and must be presented in a format consistent with the discipline and the Thesis Guide. See the Graduate Bulletin for details on the requirements and procedures for students seeking the Master's Degree.

Procedures and Policies

In the process of developing a thesis, it is the responsibility of the graduate student to follow the guidelines below.

Thesis Advisory Committee

The initial step in establishing an advisory committee is to select a thesis director. Next, with the advice of this person, a thesis topic should be selected as soon as possible. Following completion of these two steps, the balance of the committee can be formed. The committee is to be composed of a chair (thesis director) and at least three other members of the graduate faculty; two selected by the thesis director in consultation with the student and one appointed by the department chair from a list of candidates provided by the Dean of Graduate Studies. Committee members with adjunct graduate faculty membership may serve where deemed appropriate with the approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies, but may not serve as the thesis director.

Thesis Proposal

Under the supervision of the thesis director, a graduate student prepares a thesis proposal that is then submitted to the advisory committee for approval. After each committee member has signed the Thesis Proposal Approval Form, the proposal and form are submitted to the department chair for final approval. A copy of the Proposal Approval Form is then sent to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Any research proposal that uses human participants, laboratory animals, or hazardous materials must be accompanied by a memorandum of approval from the chair of the appropriate university committee. These committees are as follows: the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, the Institutional Biosafety Committee, and the Environmental Safety and Health/Radiation Committee.

Registration for Thesis

A graduate student preparing a thesis enrolls first in the appropriate thesis course. Following the initial enrollment in thesis and until the Thesis Examination is held, a student must continue to register each full semester and summer term during which the resources of the university (faculty, library, laboratories, etc.) are utilized. A student must be enrolled during the semester in which the thesis examination is conducted. However, enrollment is not required for the semester or summer session in which the student graduates unless it is the same one during which the Thesis Examination is held. Until the thesis is completed, a grade of WH (withheld) is given for each section of Thesis in which the student was enrolled. When the final copy of the thesis has been approved and signed by the advisor committee, it is the responsibility of the thesis director to turn in grades for all Thesis courses.

Supervision of Thesis Research and Writing

The graduate student conducts the thesis research and writes the thesis under the supervision of the thesis director and the thesis advisory committee.

Thesis Writing

The thesis must be written using Office Word 97 or XP or 2003. Office Word 2007 is not compatible with the older versions and should not be used. The electronic version will be used to print the final printed copy except for the cover signature page.

Thesis Defense – Thesis Draft

A thesis draft may serve as the basis for the thesis examination/defense. The thesis draft must meet the following requirements:

- a) Complete in all aspects.
- b) Clearly readable in letter-quality print but on inexpensive paper such as used in word processors and copy machines.
- c) Mechanically correct. (See Items under Final Manuscript Preparation in the Thesis Guide.)
- d) Figures, plates, and tables in final form, but photographs may be high quality reproductions.
- e) Approved for content by all members of the thesis advisory committee.

The graduate student must take a draft of the thesis to be checked by the Graduate School before filing the application for the thesis examination.

Thesis Examination

The application for Thesis Examination Form can be submitted only after the thesis draft is submitted to and approved by the Graduate School. This form must be filed in the Graduate School at least one week before the examination and no later than three (3)

weeks before the day of commencement. See the Graduate School web site for specific dates.

The thesis advisory committee also serves as the thesis examination committee. A copy of the final thesis draft must be in the hands of each member of the thesis examination committee and one copy to the Graduate School at least one week prior to the examination. The thesis draft that goes to the thesis director must contain original figures and plates.

The thesis examination is held at a time and place agreed upon by the graduate student and all members of the thesis examination committee. If the thesis examination committee requires changes or additions to the thesis more extensive than just improvements in language, punctuation, format, or illustrations, approval of the thesis shall be delayed until each committee member has a chance to examine a new draft incorporating the changes.

Report of Thesis Examination

Following the examination, the thesis director submits the Report of Thesis Examination to the Dean of the Graduate Studies.

Final Corrections, Approval, and Signatures

Following the thesis examination, all changes and corrections required by the thesis examination committee and the Graduate School must be incorporated into the final draft. The graduate student then submits the revised thesis to the Graduate Office for approval. After receiving approval from the Graduate School, the student must have a minimum of four copies of the thesis made. The final thesis and all four copies must meet all specifications of this thesis guide. The final thesis (original plus four copies) must all be signed by each member of the thesis advisory committee and must be on 20# white paper.

It is the graduate student's responsibility to check the thesis guide for proper arrangements and page numbering on each thesis. See the Graduate School web site for final thesis due dates.

Binding, Shipping, and Microfilming Fees

The graduate student must decide how many copies need to be bound (minimum of five) and go to the Technical Services Office of the Steen Library for payment of fees for binding, shipping costs, and microfilming. The graduate student obtains a receipt for payment of fees and brings a copy of the receipt to the Graduate School.

Submission of Final Copies of Thesis

Each of the final theses should be placed in a separate envelope with a copy of the cover page taped to the front of the envelope. The graduate student takes the final copies, along with the receipt for binding, shipping, and microfilming, to the Graduate School for the Dean of Graduate Studies to sign. The Graduate School then sends all copies to the Steen Library for binding. After binding, two copies will be retained by the Library, one copy will be sent to the thesis director, one copy will be sent to the graduate student's major department, and the original bound manuscript will be sent to the graduate student.

Checklist of Procedures

<input type="checkbox"/>	Request thesis director
<input type="checkbox"/>	Form Thesis Advisory Committee
<input type="checkbox"/>	Enroll in a Thesis course / prepare and submit thesis proposal
<input type="checkbox"/>	If appropriate, submit protocol for human or animal subjects review, biosafety, and/or environmental safety and health/radiation committee review.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Enroll in Thesis course(s), do and write thesis
<input type="checkbox"/>	Submit thesis to committee
<input type="checkbox"/>	Receive approval of thesis draft from the Graduate School
<input type="checkbox"/>	Submit application for thesis examination form
<input type="checkbox"/>	Complete thesis examination
<input type="checkbox"/>	Make final thesis changes, corrections, and obtain signatures
<input type="checkbox"/>	Submit final thesis to the Dean of Graduate Studies for approval
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pay fees for binding, shipping and microfilming
<input type="checkbox"/>	Submit final thesis to Graduate School

Proposal Preparation

The thesis proposal should be prepared in a format that is consistent with the field of study involved. The proposal should address the following topics, in the exact order shown below. Thesis guide specifications should be used for margins, etc. The Thesis Proposal Approval Form should serve as the cover sheet.

Title: The statement of title at this stage of thesis writing may be tentative. However, it should reflect the central purpose of the study in a brief but accurate and comprehensive manner.

Introduction: One or more paragraphs should introduce the reader to the subject of study. The introduction may indicate several of the important sources for the proposed study.

Objectives: The student should state clearly the central purpose of the proposed study and the specific objectives to be addressed.

Literature Review: This section should indicate the extent to which the student has become acquainted with the relevant literature and other resources available on the subject. It may also be used to lead into the following section.

Justification / Significance / Contribution: The student should justify the proposed research. It should be explained how the study will add to present knowledge and/or modify existing theory or practice in the discipline.

Proposed Methods of Study: This statement should explain how the student will undertake the study. Normally, a step-by-step procedure will be necessary. This section of the proposal should address such issues as procedures for the establishment of the study, how the data will be collected, and how the data will be manipulated, including statistical treatments where appropriate. Limitations as to size, time, and other factors should also be detailed. Plans for presentation and publication of the results of the study might also be included here. Finally, the student should make note of the book, manual, or journal that will be used as a style guide for the presentation of this thesis.

References / Bibliography / Literature Cites / References Cited: The sources that the student used should be in appropriate form in this section and cited appropriately in the text of the proposal.

Final Manuscript Preparation

The final manuscript is the document that is signed by the Thesis Advisory Committee and the Associate Vice President for Graduate Studies and Research and subsequently bound and placed in the Library. Therefore, the manuscript must be of the highest possible quality with respect to content and presentation. The student bears the primary responsibility for quality, but must realize that each member of the Thesis Advisory Committee also bears responsibility and is not obligated to sign the manuscript until satisfied with the overall quality of the thesis. Before making copies of the manuscript, the student should thoroughly proofread all pages of the thesis to make sure all mechanical specifications have been met. Failure to meet one or more specifications could result in the manuscript being returned for correction, thereby causing the expenditure of additional time and money that could otherwise be avoided.

Mechanical Specifications

Form C contains a template for spacing, margins, headings, and page number locations. We suggest that you make a transparency to verify your format prior to submitting your manuscript to the Graduate School.

Paper - twenty-pound (20#) white paper, 8 1/2 by 11 inches in size is required for all bound pages in all copies as well as the original. For materials too large for binding and contained in a pocket, e.g., charts and maps, a suitable high quality paper must also be used.

Type - Fonts of 12 or 10 characters per inch are acceptable for text and for figure/table captions. The preferred font is Arial 12-point. No letter is smaller than 2 millimeters. Where necessary, smaller type may be used in figures and tables but never less than a font of 8. If there is any question as to whether or not a particular type is acceptable, the student should bring a sample of the type to the Graduate Office for examination and approval.

Pagination - For preliminary pages, e.g. Table of Contents, List of Figures & Tables and Abstract, lower case Roman numerals must be placed in the center, one inch from the bottom edge of the page. For pages containing primary headings, e.g. Chapter, Bibliography, and Appendix, Arabic numerals must be placed in the upper right corner, 1 inch from the top and 1 inch from the right edges of the page. As an option, the student may place all page numbers in the center, one inch from the bottom edge of the page (see sample form C).

Spacing - Text must be double-spaced. Footnotes, captions, and figures should be single-spaced. Appendix materials also may be single-spaced. In the Bibliography/References section, citations are single-spaced with double space between citations.

Margins - All pages of the thesis must have the following margins: 1 inch on the right and bottom, 1 1/2 inches on the left and top. If optional pagination is used where the page number is centered at the bottom of each page, the bottom margin should be 1 1/2 inches throughout the manuscript. For pages bearing a primary heading, the top margin is 2 inches (see sample forms C and D). The first line of each paragraph and footnote should be indented 5 spaces from the left margin. Equations, formulas, and other such notations should be centered.

Headings - Major divisions of the thesis, e.g., Introduction, Bibliography, and Appendix, require primary headings and must begin on a new page. Primary headings are centered 2 inches from the top edge of the page and typed in all capital letters. The first line of text below the heading should be triple spaced beneath it. Secondary headings

are centered, with the first letter of each word capitalized, and do not require a new page. Triple space should be above and below secondary headings. Tertiary headings are capitalized, underlined, and begin at the left margin. Double spaces should be above and below tertiary headings (see sample forms C and D).

Figures and Tables - Line drawings and diagrams, maps, charts, halftones, photographs, etc. are considered as figures and should be of professional quality. Photographs and figures may be either color or black and white. Original photographs or high-resolution reproductions are acceptable; photocopies are not. If photographs are pasted to the page, a high quality, long-lasting cement must be used. Figures and tables require captions, which should be single-spaced. If there is insufficient space within the required margins for both the figure/table and caption, the caption may be placed on the facing page, the back of which is blank except for the page number properly located in the upper right hand corner or bottom center. Captions must be in the same type as the text and listed as written in the List of Figures and List of Tables sections of thesis. No text or number on a table or figure should be (after reduction) smaller than the equivalent character in a character set whose shortest letters are 2 millimeters high (see Figure 1). An illustration that is wide must be placed broadside on the page, with the top at the binding (left) side.

Reference Citation - Style and manner of reference citation and bibliographic format are determined by academic discipline. The style manual or journal used must be acceptable to the discipline and stated on the bottom of the Vita page preceding the identification of the typist (see sample form E). The AARC (Academic Assistance and Resource Center) Writing Program currently employs graduate and undergraduate tutors who have been trained in most of the commonly accepted documentation styles. AARC graduate tutors are engaged in similar writing, so their experience may prove useful in the evaluation of resources and their proper documentation.

Although style manuals will govern the way electronic sources should be cited, citations from web-based resources raise special concerns due to the transitory nature of the data. While electronic versions of scholarly articles appearing also in print or refereed electronic journals may be expected to persist in online form, the same is not true of conventional web sources. Thesis writers should take this into account when preparing their theses by including copies of cited text in an appendix to their work for review by the thesis committee. Sufficient material should be provided to enable the thesis committee to determine whether the sources have been used appropriately. In cases in which conventional web sources form a significant foundation for a thesis, consideration should be given to binding the appendix with the thesis to the extent this can be done without violating copyright.

Parts of the Thesis

The thesis should be arranged as follows:

1. Flyleaf - a blank page for protection in binding
2. Title Page - conventional page showing essential bibliographical information (see sample form A)
3. Signature page - serves as a formal record of approval (see sample form B)
4. Abstract - An abstract is required by the Graduate School. It should be comprised, in 150 words or less, of a brief, concise description of the problem, methods of approach, salient results obtained, and conclusions and their significance. The abstract will be published in Thesis Abstracts and therefore will largely determine who utilizes the thesis in the future.
5. Preface (Optional)
6. Acknowledgements (Optional)
7. Table of Contents - a paginated guide or outline listing primary, secondary, and tertiary headings
8. List of Figures - a paginated listing of all figure captions as they appear with the figures they accompany. Used only when thesis contains figures.
9. List of Tables - format same as item 8. Used only when thesis contains tables
10. Text - the main body of the thesis (see form C and form D)
11. Bibliography - depending on the style used, also may be labeled References, References Cited, or Literature Cited. Format must be consistent with style followed throughout the thesis
12. Appendix (Optional)
13. Vita - a brief autobiographical sketch emphasizing the student's educational and professional experience. Thesis typist and style manual are identified at the bottom of the page (see sample form E)

Important reminders:

- Make use of the templates and sample thesis documents
- Original and all copies, including signature pages, must be on 20# paper
- Have all signature pages individually signed
- Return final copies to the Graduate Office in envelopes with a copy of the cover page taped to the front of the envelopes
- Pay thesis binding, shipping and microfilming fees at the library for a minimum of five copies

Note: Should a question or problem arise concerning the mechanical content or presentation format of the thesis that is not addressed in this guide, the student should consult the Graduate Office before proceeding.