

Thesis and Dissertation Manual

Directions for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations



TARLETON
STATE UNIVERSITY

Updated June 2021

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INTRODUCTION

A master's thesis or doctoral dissertation is a formal report of research conducted by Tarleton State University students in partial fulfillment of the requirements a graduate degree. It should be prepared according to established convention of form and style to promote clarity and usefulness within a discipline or particular field of study.

Because theses and dissertations are scholarly works which are expected to contribute new knowledge to various areas of study, they should be written in the style appropriate to their individual disciplines. Writing style refers to the specifics such as documentation, insertion of graphics and ancillary materials. Students are responsible for securing a copy of the required style guide or journal before beginning work on the thesis/dissertation and following it carefully. Students are advised to consult their thesis or dissertation committee chair to ensure they are using the appropriate style guide or journal.

To ensure uniformity in the physical format of all dissertations accepted by the College of Graduate Studies, **the following directions take precedence over the directions contained in the style guides or journal formats selected by the departments.** If conflicts arise between the style guides and the directions which follow, the instructions specified herein must be followed. Any deviation from the form prescribed in these directions must be approved by the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies before a final copy is submitted. Questions concerning style about which the student and his or her thesis/dissertation committee are in doubt should be referred to the dean before the thesis/dissertation has been prepared in final form.

Since the documents will be bound and placed in the Dick Smith Library for circulation and will be submitted to ProQuest, making them available for wide readership throughout the world, they must be stylistically correct and free from errors of fact. ***The student and Thesis/Dissertation Committee Chair bear the sole responsibility for the correctness of the manuscript submitted to the College of Graduate Studies for final approval.***

The purpose of this manual is to guide the student through the process of preparing and filing a thesis/dissertation. Students who meticulously follow the directions in this manual will find the task of delivering a professional product much, much easier. Please refer to the sample pages in this manual often. Checklists are provided throughout the manual to facilitate accurate compilation.

THESIS/DISSERTATION IMPORTANT DEADLINES

To graduate in a given semester, students must meet the scheduled deadline for submittal of the thesis/dissertation in the final term of enrollment. The deadline dates are on the University calendar. Students submitting after the published deadline cannot graduate until the following graduation exercise. Deadlines for each semester are as follows:

The deadline for the submission of the defended, final, committee-approved theses/dissertations to [ProQuest](#) and signed [Final Approval Form \(Form 4\)](#) to the College of Graduate Studies is:

Fall: *November 1st*

Spring: *April 1st*

Summer: *July 1st*

Note: If the deadline falls on a holiday or non-work day, the effective deadline will be the next working day after the stated deadline.

THESIS/DISSERTATION WORKFLOW

1. Following the proposal presentation and committee approval of any required edits, the student will submit their research to the appropriate Research Compliance Committee (if applicable) and then complete and submit the [Thesis/Dissertation Proposal Approval Form \(Form 1\)](#) along with the proposal abstract. The abstract and approval form will be imaged to serve as the permanent record of the agreed scope of work for the student's research.
2. For research requiring Research Compliance Committee approval (IRB/IBC/IACUC), research cannot begin until final approval is obtained. Any research protocol initiated without required approvals may not be used in a thesis or dissertation.
3. Following preparation of the final (ready to defend) thesis/dissertation, the student will coordinate with the chair and committee to arrange a suitable time for the defense presentation and notify the College of Graduate Studies at least two weeks in advance of the defense presentation by submitting the [Thesis/Dissertation Defense Schedule Form \(Form 2\)](#).
4. Following the defense and final edits of thesis/dissertation, the student or committee chair must submit the [Thesis/Dissertation Defense Results & Comprehensive Assessment Form \(Form 3\)](#) indicating if the student passed or failed the defense. If the research required IRB or IACUC approval, the Thesis/Dissertation Defense Approval Form will not be accepted without the

[completion report](#) (IRB) and/or [annual report](#) (IACUC) attached, indicating project completion or a memo from the PI indicating why the project is not complete and when the project will be complete can replace the completion report (IRB) or annual report (IACUC).

5. Once the thesis/dissertation has been approved for binding and final publication, it must be uploaded online to ProQuest. The student or committee chair must submit the [Thesis/Dissertation Final Approval form \(Form 4\)](#) to the College of Graduate Studies indicating the thesis/dissertation has been reviewed, approved and is ready for binding and final publication.

THESIS/DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

Students who wish to complete a thesis or dissertation must first submit a proposal to their committee for approval. The first step is to prepare the thesis proposal in cooperation with the committee chair and/or committee.

Once the presentation is complete and the proposal is approved by the thesis/dissertation committee, the student must submit the [Thesis/Dissertation Proposal Approval Form \(Form 1\)](#) to the College of Graduate Studies including the IRB/IACUC/IBC proposal number, or a memo from the committee chair with justification of why IRB/IACUC/IBC committee approval is not applicable and a copy of the proposal abstract. *The Thesis/Dissertation Proposal Approval Form can be submitted before final IRB/IACUC/IBC committee approval, but cannot be submitted before the proposal has been submitted to the committee and a proposal number issued. **Research cannot be initiated until final approval of the appropriate Research Compliance Committee (IRB/IACUC/IBC) is obtained (if applicable).***

The proposal abstract must accompany the Thesis/Dissertation Proposal Approval Form. The proposal abstract will be archived by the College of Graduate Studies as a record of the agreement between the student and committee related to the scope of the thesis/dissertation research. The abstract should be less than one page in length and should include a general description and scope of the project, and a timeline for completion of the project.

THESIS/DISSERTATION COMPONENTS

Theses/Dissertations produced by Tarleton students should have three major components. These include preliminary pages, text of the manuscript, and supplementary pages. Students are encouraged to use the following pages as a checklist to ensure proper compilation.

Preliminary Pages

Preliminary pages should be arranged in the following order:

1. *One Flyleaf*. This is a blank sheet of paper placed before the approval page.
2. Title Page.
3. *Copyright Notice (optional)*. For those who do apply for a copyright, a line must be included on the title page (see pre-formatted pages).
4. *Acknowledgement Page (optional)*. This section is limited to two pages. It should carry the same style, spacing and margins used in other text.
5. *Abstract*. This page must be double-spaced and contain no more than 400 words, including all words in the heading. Typically, an abstract includes a brief statement of the problem, strategies for collecting data, findings, conclusions and recommendations. It should be placed immediately before the table of contents.
6. *Nomenclature*. This optional list may be placed in the following places: before the Table of Contents, as the last preliminary page, before the Reference section, or as an Appendix. The heading is bold if other major headings are bold, and the list is in the same font size and style as text.
7. *Table of Contents*. The table of contents contains chapter numbers, chapter titles and section titles of the thesis/dissertation (*may vary depending on chosen format: Chapter-format vs. multiple product-format*) and the beginning page number of each section. Among the preliminary pages, only the List of Graphics containing the Tables and Figures should be included in the table of contents. The abstract is not contained in the table of contents. All major divisions of the narrative text (chapters or sections) and principle subheadings should be indicated by appropriate spacing and indentation. Supplemental pages including the bibliography and appendices, if used, must be included in the table of contents. The numbering, phrasing and pagination of titles and headings in the table of contents must be identical to those on the pages of the thesis/dissertations. Note what is in bold and what is not in bold in the table of contents and List of Graphics on the pre-formatted versions online. **Note: Dissertations completed using the multiple-productformat can simply replace the Chapter headings and subheadings with the appropriate section names - e.g., Literature Review, Method, etc.**
8. *List of Graphics* (contain the following):
Tables (if required). A list of tables is not necessary if the thesis/dissertation has only one table. Students must consult the prescribed style manuals for proper handling of such graphics in their thesis/dissertation.

Figures or Illustrations (if required). A list of figures is not necessary if the manual only has one figure of illustration. Students must consult the prescribed style manuals for proper handling of such graphics in their thesis/dissertation.

The word “Figure” and “Table” are not plural in the List of Graphics.

Text of the Thesis/Dissertation

Chapter Format

Theses must be divided into chapters. Dissertations have the option of a five-chapter format. Ordinarily, there will be an introductory chapter; the major report of the study, divided into logical chapters; and the summary chapter. The style guide of the student’s academic discipline will be the resource for determining the appropriate divisions of the main body.

1. *Organization by Chapter.* The thesis/dissertation must be divided into chapters. Each chapter must be included in the table of contents. The word “**CHAPTER**” is to be bold and written in capital letters along with its number written in capital Roman Numerals. The next line, after a double space, have the CHAPTER TITLE, not in bold, and followed by a double space. Subdivisions of chapters should be made following the selected style guide. Subdivisions, however, should not begin on a new page but separated from the last line of the preceding text by a double space.
2. *References or Bibliography.* These are preceded by a single page containing the word “REFERENCES,” “BIBLIOGRAPHY” or whatever your style guide calls it, centered (vertically and horizontally) and typed in all capital letters. The appropriate style guide must be followed for the arrangement of items within the references or bibliography section. The next page does not repeat the title, but begins with the citations.

Multiple Product Format

Dissertations written in a multiple product format will generally be comprised of the following sections:

1. Introduction consists of the identification and definition of problem in context and rationale for the study.
2. The Review of Knowledge for Action section provides an extensive review of supporting literature, theory, and/or data necessary to frame the problem of practice and elucidate its root causes. This section also comprises relevant literature and theory regarding potential improvement initiatives, if applicable.
3. The Method section describes methods of data collection that address the research question(s) and evaluation methods.

4. The Results section describes results and findings from the study relative to the identified problem.
5. The Discussion section presents implications and applications of findings to address the problem of practice, including:
 - Interpretation of findings by research question;
 - Evidence-based recommendations or applications for practice in the local context and the broader field; and
 - Future considerations and investigations.

Supplemental Pages

1. *Appendix or Appendices.* Any supplementary material which would be useful to the reader for elucidation of the text of the thesis/dissertation should be placed in the appendix. Examples of such materials might include original data not otherwise presented, documents not readily available to the reader, laws or legal opinion forms, and any material not easily reproduced in the text. Students should consult their thesis/dissertation chair to ascertain the appropriateness of including an appendix in their documents. Each appendix should be preceded by a page on which the word “APPENDIX” is centered (vertically and horizontally) and typed in all capital letters. If the appendices are individually identified, a page should be provided for each, containing the appropriate identification: “APPENDIX A,” etc. The appendix or appendices must be listed in the table of contents. Tables, figures or illustrations which are not included in the text should be placed in an appendix and should be numbered in series with those in the text. They should be included in the List of Graphics in the preliminary pages.
2. *One Flyleaf.* One blank page at the end of the thesis/dissertation.

PREPARATION OF THE THESIS/DISSERTATION

Font:

The thesis/dissertation must be typed in 12-point font. The same font style must be used throughout the document; either Arial or Times New Roman, or similar professional font, may be used. Words or phrases requiring emphasis and words which are italicized in quotations should be underlined or italicized according to the style manual specified by the program.

Margins:

The thesis/dissertation must have the following margins set: All left margins set at 1.5”; all bottom, right and top margins should be set at 1”.

Pagination:

Every page of the thesis/dissertation is numbered starting with the Table of Contents. The preliminary pages are numbered consecutively in lower case Roman numerals centered one half inch from the bottom of the page. The Title Page is counted as page i but not numbered. All other pages in the thesis/dissertation are numbered with Arabic numerals, centered one half inch from the bottom of the page. Page numbers are not punctuated. This pagination overrides that of any style used by disciplines or departments. Students should consult campus computer labs or the Writing Center for any assistance in getting computer software to conform to these guidelines.

Photographs:

Photographs should electronically inserted into the document and printed on the same type of paper used throughout the thesis/dissertation. Photographs must conform to the standard margins. Oversized photographs may be oriented to fit the page, with the top of the photograph at the left side of the page. In this case, the caption should be placed at the top or bottom of the photograph, not the page.

Oversized and Reduced Materials:

Any oversized material that needs to be included and cannot be reduced to fit the standard size paper must be folded to fit the standard margins and must be mounted to the same type of paper used throughout the manuscript. It should be mounted so that when it is unfolded it may be read without turning the page on its side. If the oversized material is double-sided, it must be placed in a 6 ½ x 9 ½ inch envelope which should be securely mounted to a sheet of the approved paper and included as an appendix. If material needs to be reduced to fit the paper, the reduction must allow for clear and easy reading. The minimum size of numerals and capital letters is 1.5 millimeters, or 9/16”.

Graphics (tables, figures, and illustrations):

Small tables and figures may be placed within the text, as close as possible to the text to which they refer. They should be enclosed in a simple text box to separate them from the regular text. A graphic that is larger than half a page should be placed on the first page following the text to which it refers.

Each graphic must be identified with a title and must be numbered consecutively throughout the text, including those placed in appendices. Tables are numbered in Arabic numerals; figures, illustrations and other graphics should also be numbered in Arabic numerals.

The titles and numbers are listed in the List of Graphics that follows the Table of Contents. Lengthy titles are listed by the first sentence of the title only. No two titles should be identical.

Graphics that exceed one page should have the complete title and number on the first page only. Subsequent pages of the same graphic should indicate the number of the graphic and contain the word Continued.

Use of Copyrighted Materials:

Copyrighted material **cannot** be used legally without expressed permission from the copyright holder. If such material must be included, the student is responsible for obtaining and incurring any cost of necessary permissions. The following notice must be provided for each copyrighted item: “Copyright 20__ Copyright Holder’s Name. “Used by permission.” This notice appears after the last line of the first page of each separate copyrighted item.

Copyrighting a thesis/dissertation is optional; if the author wishes to assert his/her copyright, the notice must appear on the title page of the manuscript. The official copyright notice is at the bottom of the page, centered, and single-spaced. The format is as follows:

Copyright 2022 Jennifer Smith

The copyright may be registered formally with the U.S. Copyright Office. Information may be found on the Internet at www.copyright.gov.

Securing Copyright:

The Copyright Act of 1976 (title 17 of the United States Code) came into effect on January 1, 1978. This general revision of the copyrighted laws of the United States made important changes in the American copyright system. Publication and proper notice of copyright are no longer requirements for securing copyright. Today, copyright is secured automatically when a work is created, and it is assumed to be created when it is fixed in a copy which can be perceived.

Copyright registration is a legal formality intended to make a public record of an individual’s copyright claim to a work. Registration procedures require the submission of an application form, a filing fee, and a nonreturnable deposit of the work being registered. This can be done during the ProQuest online submission procedure.

SUBMITTING THE THESIS/DISSERTATION

Following the defense and approval of the thesis/dissertation by the Thesis/Doctoral Committee and by the deadline in the University calendar, the student must submit a final version to the College of Graduate Studies through ProQuest. **The Thesis/Dissertation Final Approval form (Form 4), with the Committee Chair’s signature, must be sent directly to the College of Graduate Studies (and not through ProQuest).**

If corrections are required, the student will be informed by email that modifications must be made. Students will make those corrections and re-upload into ProQuest and submit.

Following review to ensure that all corrections have been made, the thesis/dissertation will be submitted to ProQuest for publishing and binding.

The student must pay a binding fee and complete the online publishing submission at the time the committee-approved thesis/dissertation is submitted through ProQuest.

REPRODUCTION OF THE THESIS/DISSERTATION

The only acceptable methods of reproducing are xerography, offset, or letter quality originals produced by word processor laser or ink jet printers. The print must be clear, unbroken, and consistent throughout. No dark areas or stray marks in the margins or white spaces on the pages will be acceptable. The same method of reproduction must be used for each of the final copies submitted to the College of Graduate Studies.

Plagiarism

The use of words, ideas, photographs, graphics and concepts of others without assigning proper credit to the original author or creator constitutes **plagiarism**. Any work deemed to be plagiarized, whether on purpose or accidentally, could result in the student's dismissal from the program and no degree will be awarded. Students must consult with their committees **if in any doubt** about the appearance of plagiarism in their work. See the Tarleton State University Student Handbook or consult your graduate committee with questions regarding plagiarism.

THESIS/DISSERTATION FORMAT CHECKLIST

Preliminary Page Order and Comments:

- Flyleaves (one at the beginning and one at the end of thesis/dissertation)
- Title page (this is always page i, counted but not numbered)
- Acknowledgments (optional, limit to two pages)
- Abstract (not numbered; 400 word limit; Format according to Manual)
- Nomenclature (optional)
- Table of Contents (this is the first page that is numbered; start counting with the Title page)
- List of Graphics (if applicable; follow the Manual exactly)
- Text, (Theses: divided into Chapters) or (Dissertations: five-chapter format or multiple product format)
- Bibliography (may be labeled literature cited, references, etc.)
- Appendices (if applicable)

Table of Contents and List of Graphics:

- Bolding in ToC and chapter starts correspond with Manual.
- Table and figure titles are listed in one line, and no two titles are identical

Margins:

- Ensure the left margin is 1 ½ ” on all pages
- Ensure right, top, and bottom margins are 1” on all pages

Title Page:

- Ensure that the name of your degree is correct
- List committee members’ names and terminal degrees. Ensure the committee chair is listed as chair and first in your list
- The date on the title page must be the month and year of your degree award date

Font and Pagination:

- Font should be 12 point throughout the document, except for tables and other graphics
- Ensure all pages are numbered consecutively on bottom center of each page. (The title page is counted, but not numbered). All pages before the first page of Chapter 1 will be numbered using roman numerals (ii, iii, iv, etc...). The first page of Chapter 1 will begin with “1” and use Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc...) to the end of the document

THESIS/DISSERTATION RESOURCES

Helpful Contacts:

- College of Graduate Studies, gradinfo@tarleton.edu or 254/968-9104 for style and formatting questions
- TSU Computer/IT HelpDesk, 254/968-9885
- Grammatical assistance available through the TSU University Writing Center, <https://www.tarleton.edu/writingcenter/index.html>, 254/968-1814

Helpful Online Resources:

- [MLA Information](#)
- [APA Information](#)
- Copyright Information, www.copyright.gov

PRE-FORMATTED THESIS/DISSERTATION PRELIMINARY PAGES

The following pages provide a number of samples for the concomitant paperwork necessary for submitting a thesis/dissertation to Tarleton State University. Students and committee members must review the samples carefully, as any variation in the draft can impede graduation.

Pre-formatted preliminary pages can be found on the College of Graduate Studies website, <https://www.tarleton.edu/graduate/current/thesis-dissertation.html>

[INSERT FULL TITLE CENTERED AND IN ALL CAPS HERE]

Choose an item.

by

[INSERT YOUR FULL NAME IN ALL CAPS HERE]

Submitted to the College of Graduate Studies of
Tarleton State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Choose an item.

Chair of Committee,
Committee Members,

Head of Department,
Acting Graduate Dean

[Insert Full Name Here in Upper and Lowercase]
[Insert Full Name Here in Upper and Lowercase]
[Insert Full Name Here in Upper and Lowercase]
[Insert Full Name Here in Upper and Lowercase]
[Insert Full Name Here in Upper and Lowercase]
Nathan Heller, PhD

Choose an item. Choose an item.

Major Subject: Choose an item.

(IF APPLICABLE) Copyright Choose an item. First Name Last Name

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Acknowledgements page is optional and limited to two pages. It follows the Abstract. Heading is bold if other major headings are bold. It is in the same font size and style as text, and the vertical spacing, paragraph style margins and right alignment are the same as used in text. Use complete sentences.

ABSTRACT

Last Name, First Name, Title of the Student's Thesis/Dissertation, Choose an item.
(Choose an item.), Choose an item., Choose an item., XXXX pp., XXX tables, XXX
figures, bibliography, XXX titles.

The text of the Abstract starts two double spaces below the major heading. The date included will be the month and year of the student's graduation. Arabic numerals will be used to indicate the number of pages, tables, figures, and titles in the bibliography. Your Abstract must be a "complete snapshot" of your manuscript and be a stand-alone piece and should be written following the same style used in the thesis/dissertation. Since the text of the Abstract will be distributed widely through a variety of databases, formal citations, images, and complex equations should not be included. Paragraph one introduces your specific problem and the methods used. The remaining paragraphs present the research and results in detail. The text of the Abstract should not exceed 400 words. Any term (or numeral) with a space on either side is counted as one word.

NOMENCLATURE

B/CS	Bryan/College Station
HSUS	Humane Society of the United States
P	Pressure
T	Time
TVA	Tennessee Valley Authority
TxDOT	Texas Department of Transportation

This optional list may be placed in the following places: before the Table of Contents, as the last preliminary page, before the Reference section, or as an Appendix. The heading is bold if other major headings are bold, and the list is in the same font size and style as text.

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Note: Dissertations completed using the multiple-product format can simply replace the Chapter headings and subheadings with the appropriate section names - e.g., Literature Review, Method, etc.

LIST OF GRAPHICS

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