**MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY**

**THESIS FORMATTING GUIDE**

**Contents**

[Introduction](#Intro)

[Print Size/Font](#printsize)

[Margins](#margins)

[Page Numbering](#pagenumbering)

[Paragraph Spacing](#paragsp)

[Standard Order](#so)

[Title Page](#tp)

[Copyright Page](#copyr)

[Abstract](#abstract)

[Approval Page](#approval)

[Acceptance/Signature Page](#accept)

[Acknowledgements/Dedication](#acknowledge)

[Table of Contents](#toc)

[Abbreviations](#abb)

[Heading](#heading)s

[Citations of Literature and Reference List](#citoflit)

[Tables, Figures, Illustrations, Numerals, Appendices](#tabetc)

[Tables](#tables)

[Figures](#fig)

[Appendices](#appen)

[Style Guides](#Styleguides)

[Manuscript Option](#manu)

[Personal Bound Copies](#bound)

**Introduction**

* A thesis is to be prepared according to the specifications and standards of the Graduate College and those approved by the faculty of your program of study. This Thesis Formatting Guide is the primary guide, and your department/program or journal is the secondary style guide. **Follow this Thesis Guide for all formatting details that are specified. When formatting details are not specified by this Thesis Formatting Guide, follow your department’s designated style guide or journal format.**

**Print Size and Font**

* Times New Roman, 12 pt. font size, should be used throughout your thesis, including tables, figures, appendices, page numbers, references, etc. Italics may be used as required for scientific names or species, book or journal titles, and other situations indicated in the style manual approved by the faculty in your program. Scientific writing may require specific symbols for units of measure or other situations fitting the discipline. All text must be in black ink.

**Margins**

* All margins should be set at 1 inch (see special instructions if you want to create a paper version for binding). The Thesis Template pages are already formatted to meet margin requirements, but double check after inserting your information to ensure the appropriate margin size. These are not the default settings of Microsoft Word, so you may need to adjust them for every section of your document if you alter the Thesis Template. These margins apply to **all** portions of the thesis, including appendices, illustrations, tables, and graphs.
* Do not leave empty space at the bottom of a page, except when at the end of a major heading (chapter). If a table or figure does not fit on the page where it is first mentioned and is put on the next page, fill in this blank space (at the bottom of the page after first mention) with the next text; fill down to the bottom margin or top footnote, even if this text is on a new subject.

**Page Numbering**

* Page numbers should be centered and ½ inch from the bottom of each page. This formatting is already set in the Thesis Template pages, but double check before submitting. Note that the default for footers in Word appears to be two lines: Your page number is inserted on the upper line, so you do not see the lower (empty) line. When you set your footer to be ½”, you may need to delete this empty line below the page number in order to get the page number in the proper position.
* The title page is counted as “i” although the pagination is not shown on the title page. The Thesis Template is already set properly. Additional pages prior to the body of the thesis should be numbered with small Roman numerals (ii, iii, etc.). The body of the thesis through any appendix should be numbered with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.). Page numbers should be centered in portrait layout even though tables and figures may be shown in landscape formats.

**Paragraph Spacing**

* Indent all paragraphs ½ inch from the left margin. Justify on the left side only. Consult the style manual approved by the faculty in your program to determine appropriate actions on widow and orphan issues.
* Double space the body of the text, including between paragraphs. Do not put extra vertical spacing between paragraphs. Paragraphs should be formatted so that there is no added space above or below them. Some versions of Word will default to adding additional spacing between paragraphs. Use the *Layout* tab to set the *Before* and *After* spacing at 0 pt.
* Single space the abstract, footnotes, quotations of five lines or more (block quotes), table headings, figure captions, and items within in a bulleted/numbered list (double space before and after the list). In addition, you may use single space in the Table of Contents and in the Acknowledgement Page to keep these sections on one page each. Finally, references also should be single spaced within each reference and double spaced between references.

**Standard Order**

Your thesis will contain the following components in the order given:

1. Title Page

2. Copyright Notice (if desired)

3. Abstract

4. Approval Page

5. Acknowledgements (if any, and Dedication, if desired)

6. Table of Contents

7. List of Tables (if any)

8. List of Figures (if any)

9. Body of Thesis

10. Literature Cited/References

11. Appendices (if any)

**Title Page**

* Your thesis title is important! It should command the reader’s attention and be descriptive of the research. People who search the literature often make selections about what to access and read based on the title. A maximum of ten words is a good goal.
* The title and author entries are centered within the margins of the title page. The title, in all upper case and bolded lettering, is double spaced and, if longer than 48 characters, is presented in an inverted pyramid style.
* Be sure to verify correct spelling of the title because spell-check programs do not check words that are in uppercase letters.
* The name of the degree is shown on the title page, but the option/emphasis area within the degree is not shown. If you are unsure of the specific title of your degree, check the list of programs on our website (<http://graduate.missouristate.edu/GradProgramList.htm>). The title page is counted as “i” but the page number is not shown on this first page.

**Copyright Page**

* A thesis is eligible for copyright protection, but a copyright page is not required. The extent of ownership of the research and data embodied in a thesis is subject to considerable variation. An understanding of ownership should come from discussions with your thesis advisor, which should occur early in the research process.
* Since issues dealing with copyright are legal and subject to changes in federal law. For more information on copyright and registration, please see the following online document: “Copyright Law and Graduate Research” at <http://media2.proquest.com/documents/UMI_CopyrightGuide.pdf>.
* If desired, insert a “Copyright Page” following the title page of the thesis. Nothing else should be on this page except for the page number, which would be “ii.” The following information is placed at the bottom of the page in one of these two acceptable formats:

Copyright 2017 by [Insert your full legal name]

or

© 2017, [Insert your full legal name]

**Abstract**

* The abstract is to be limited to one page and is usually a single paragraph. The body of the abstract should be single spaced. Manually verify correct spelling of the title. Many spell-check programs do not check words that are all uppercase.
* A good abstract should begin with the purpose, specific objective, or hypothesis of the study. Use one or two sentences that focus the research on a specific problem or situation. Proceed by describing the primary methods or approach used to achieve the objective. Summarize your results, and then state conclusions or potential ramifications of the findings.
* Below the abstract include a line which contains at least five (5), and not more than 10, keywords. These terms will be used to assist with cataloguing your thesis and allow potential readers to discover your work via searches. Keywords should be lowercase unless they are proper nouns. Please verify that these keywords are spelled correctly and are the most appropriate to highlight your work.

**Approval Page**

* The names listed on this page indicate approval of the academic content as judged by the committee members in the discipline. These graduate faculty members attest that the thesis is an accurate presentation of the scholarly work conducted by the student in the style and form appropriate for the area of study. Additionally, committee members and the Dean of the Graduate College verify that the thesis follows the formatting guidelines established by the Graduate College and is worthy of publication as a Missouri State University thesis.
* At the bottom of the page, include the language, “*In the interest of academic freedom and the principle of free speech, approval of this thesis indicates the format is acceptable and meets the academic criteria for the discipline as determined by the faculty that constitute the thesis committee. The content and views expressed in this thesis are those of the student-scholar and are not endorsed by Missouri State University, its Graduate College, or its employees*.”
* Manually verify correct spelling of the title. Many spell-check programs do not check words that are all uppercase. Verify that the title is exactly the same in every place it is typed: Title page, abstract, and title in the thesis body. Be consistent with faculty titles: Name, Degree, Role. See the Thesis Template for specifics.

**Acknowledgements/Dedication**

* If you desire, you may insert a page acknowledging the assistance and support of others. A dedication can be included, but serves a separate purpose. If used, a dedication should be a separate paragraph with no subheading, generally starting with “I dedicate this thesis to…” It should be separated from the rest of the acknowledgement by a blank line. Single spacing of these paragraphs is acceptable if necessary to keep this all on one page.

**Table of Contents**

* The Table of Contents (TOC) focuses on the body of your thesis and lists all primary and secondary headings. Some theses also include tertiary headings. The heading names in your TOC must exactly match the heading names in the body of your thesis. Primary headings in the TOC should not be indented. Secondary headings (if used) should be indented ½” once, and tertiary headings (if used) should be indented ½” twice (for a total of 1”). Even if you use tertiary (or subsequent) headings in the text, you are not required to include them in the Table of Contents, but do be consistent throughout the document.
* Do not include in the TOC those preliminary pages that use Roman numerals for page numbers; rather, start with the first page of the body of the thesis.
* The page numbers in the TOC align along the right margin as illustrated in the Thesis Template.
* Use double-spacing in the TOC unless there are too many items to fit on one page. In that case, use single-spacing.
* Verify carefully that the page numbers listed in the TOC accurately reflect the location of the heading within the body of the thesis.

**Abbreviations**

* Each abbreviation and acronym should be introduced in parenthesis immediately after the first use of the complete word or phrase. The only exception is that this can be omitted for very uniformly accepted and understood abbreviations, such as USA, FBI, DNA, and for common units of measure (e.g., g for grams, cm for centimeters).

**Headings**

* Headings are essential for dividing the body of the thesis, and they help readers organize the information in a meaningful way. Descriptive headings focus attention on distinctive sections and enable a quick targeting of salient information addressed in the thesis. Depending on the nature of the subject, more than one level of heading may be appropriate. It is vital that formatting the levels of heading is consistent.
* Begin primary headings (often chapter titles) on a new page. These primary headings should be centered, bold, upper case, and separated from the text that follows by an extra space (blank line of double spacing).
* Secondary headings should follow a double-spaced blank line. They are placed at the left margin, bold, and in title case (capitalize first letter of each word other than small words such as articles and prepositions).
* Tertiary headings are placed at the beginning of an indented paragraph. They are bolded and in title case, followed by a period. The text of the paragraph follows the period.
* Fourth level headings are placed at the beginning of an indented paragraph. They are underlined and in title case, followed by a period. The text of the paragraph follows the period.
* It is not acceptable to have just one subheading under a higher-level heading. Either divide the content into at least two smaller sections or keep the higher-level heading for the entire section.

**Citation of Literature and Reference List**

* Every reference cited in the text should be listed in the Literature Cited (Reference) section that follows the main body of the thesis. Likewise, references listed in the Literature Cited section must have been cited in the text, or they should not be listed. This one-to-one correspondence between citations in the text and listing of references is essential.
* The style used for literature citations in the text, as well as the format of the Literature Cited (Reference) section of the thesis, varies with discipline. Your style must match the style of the secondary style guide you chose. The most important consideration in citation of references is consistency. Follow explicitly the style manual agreed upon with your advisor. The Graduate College does not dictate this choice, but you must be consistent in details such as:
* Use of “and” versus “&”
* Use of “et al.” when a reference has multiple authors
* Punctuation within citations, and between citations that are in the same parentheses
* When multiple references are cited together, use the proper sequence (chronological or alphabetical)
* Use lower case (a, b, c, etc.) when you have multiple references by the same author in the same year. For example: (Bird, 2008a) and (Bird, 2008b). The same letters must be present in the reference list too.
* The style and sequence or order of arranging elements within a reference will follow the style manual your advisor has indicated. Similarly, the order of listing references should conform to that style manual. Whereas an alphabetical listing is the most common method, some disciplines have a unique approach. As with citing the references in the thesis text, the format used to list the references must be consistent; each reference listed must be in the same format.

**Tables, Figures, Illustrations, Numerals, and Appendices: General Information**

* These elements of a thesis are intended to be concise and focused forms of communication. Titles (captions), headings, labels, graph axes, symbols, abbreviations, and other elements of figures, tables, and illustrations must be self-explanatory.
* A figure, table, or illustration can either occupy a separate page of the thesis or be integrated within a page of text, but this must be consistent throughout the entire thesis. If the element is included on a page with text, there must be a blank line (double-spacing) before and after the element to clearly set it apart from the text.
* The text must include a reference to each table, figure, illustration, or appendix. Tables, figures, and illustrations must follow the reference either later on the same page or on the next available page. Alternatively, some formats put all the figures/tables at the end of the section (chapter) in which the information is presented. In other formats, figures/tables may be together at the end, after the references. If this method is used, present all tables (in the order mentioned in the text), and then present all figures.
* As stated previously, there should not be blank space at the bottom of a page unless it concludes a chapter. This frequently means a table/figure will not be immediately after the paragraph in which it is first named. There may be text on the next topic added to fill the page to the bottom followed by the appearance of the table on the next page.

**Tables**

* Tables might include a variety of types of data (e.g., measurement, calculation, and description), statistical analysis, lists, or succinct descriptions. Tables must display the information in two or more columns and two or more rows (column and row headers do not count as “data”). The table number and accompanying title/caption is placed **above** the body of the table. Follow your selected style manual as to whether these elements are centered or left justified without indentation, and whether each word starts with a capital letter.
* Table captions should be focused, descriptive, and short. However, they may need to be 2-3 lines so that the table and caption are self-explanatory. Captions should be single spaced.
* Use a solid line above and below the body of the table, thus delineating the table.
* Follow main column headings by a line that separates them from the data.
* Use horizontal lines within the headings section to encompass several common elements.
* Vertical lines and gridlines are not acceptable in a table. Instead, use extra space to separate rows. Generally, rows of data should be double spaced, but this can be reduced to 1.5 spacing if double-spacing prevents the table from fitting on one page.
* Depending on the number of columns and amount of text in each, the table can extend from margin to margin, or can be narrower. If the latter, it can be left-justified or centered, but this decision must be consistent for all tables narrower than the page margins.
* Spacing within a row of the table can be single-spaced if it includes a lot of text, but additional spacing is required between rows of the table (2x or 1.5x).
* Excessively large and complex tables that require multiple pages are discouraged, but if necessary, secondary pages should state “Table X continued” and repeat the headings (and footers/legends, if any).
* Table footers/legends are used to explain symbols, give notes on a statistical analysis, define abbreviations, amplify certain aspects of the table, or recognize sources.
* Theses including tables should provide a List of Tables (table number, title, and page) section following the Table of Contents. It is not necessary to include the entire table caption here, just what might be considered the table title (often the first few words of the caption).
* Numbers in the text or table that are less than 1.00 should be consistently formatted—Decide whether to put a zero prior to the decimal point or not (0.123 or all .123), how many decimal places to include, etc.

**Figures**

* These include a variety of illustrative materials such as graphs, charts, schematics and diagrams, line drawings, maps, photographs, and photomicrographs.
* Figure captions should be placed immediately **below** the figure. This includes the figure number (e.g., Figure 1) followed by a concise, descriptive statement. The figure caption should only be placed on the prior page if space prohibits placement directly below the figure. The figure caption can line-up with the left edge of the figure or the left margin. If the caption is less than one line and the figure is centered, the caption may be centered, too.
* Figures should be large enough to be easily interpreted.
* Use the same font style for the axes labels, axes numbers, figure legend/labeling, etc. as you use for the thesis text.
* Number figures sequentially through the manuscript.
* Color can be used in graphs, maps, photos, etc.
* Theses including figures should provide a list of Figures (figure number, title, and page) following the Table of Contents (and the List of Tables if there is one). It is not necessary to include the entire figure caption here, just what might be considered the figure title (often the first few words of the caption).
* Illustrations are included as figures in theses. They may consist of hand-lettering or drawing in black ink or photographs.

**Appendices**

* Appendices may be used to display information that is too detailed or comprehensive to include in a table within the thesis.
* Appendices should be listed in your Table of Contents and each must be mentioned at least once in the body of the thesis. If you have more than one appendix, the order of your appendices must match the order in which they are mentioned.
* If you have just one appendix, format the heading “APPENDIX” at the top of the page and include it in the Table of Contents as a primary heading. If you have more than one appendix, make “APPENDICES” your primary heading and treat each appendix as a secondary heading (e.g., Appendix A, Appendix B, etc.). To avoid confusion, tables and/or figures in these appendices should not be called “tables and figures” or be included in the Lists of Tables/Figures: Start captions with “Appendix B. …” If you want to put multiple pieces (text, tables, figures) within one appendix (i.e., tertiary divisions), these can be called Appendix B-1, Appendix B-2, etc.

**Style Guides**

* The Graduate College Thesis Formatting Guide is the primary style guide, and your advisor will help you choose a secondary style guide that suits your discipline and work. Items not mandated by the Thesis Formatting Guide will be determined by the secondary style guide. The choice of a style guide or manual to assist you will be guided by the nature of the thesis and the professional standards of your academic discipline, so discuss this with your thesis advisor. A recent sample journal article should be provided with your thesis if you use other than APA or MLA as the secondary style guide.

**Manuscript Option**

* A student and the thesis advisor may choose to use the Manuscript Option instead of the traditional thesis layout. This is appropriate when the thesis consists of two or three separate manuscripts that will be submitted to a scholarly journal.
* The following organization should be used for theses using the Manuscript Option:
  + Overview
    - Introduce the entire thesis and explain how the component chapters (i.e., individual manuscripts) are connected, address elements of a common program, etc.
  + Chapter 1 (Manuscript 1) Title
    - Introduction
    - Methods
    - Results
    - Discussion
    - References
  + Chapter 2 (Manuscript 2) Title
    - Introduction
    - Methods
    - Results
    - Discussion
    - References
  + Summary
    - Tie together the results of the separate chapters (manuscripts) and discuss how they fit together. This section is typically 2 or 3 pages.
  + Additional References
    - Cite references used in the Overview or Summary sections that are not cited in the other chapters.
  + Appendices (if any)
  + Index (if any)
* Note that the preliminary pages will remain unchanged from the Thesis Template in manuscript option.

**Personal Bound Copies**

* Missouri State does not require the submission of a bound thesis for the library. Electronic versions of all theses are included in [BearWorks](https://bearworks.missouristate.edu/). If you or your committee members want a printed bound copy of your thesis, you will need to create a different version of your thesis to be printed.
* The left margin should be reset to 1.5 inches.
* The Table of Contents and Lists of Tables and Figures will need to be revised to reflect the new page number locations that resulted from use of a wider margin.
* It is recommended that you print the thesis on white 8.5 x 11 inch paper that is between **20 and 24 lb. weight** and at least 25% **cotton** and **acid free**. This paper contains lower amounts of acid fiber, is less subject to yellowing with age, and generally blocks print from the following page showing through.
* The binding charge is $10 per copy. Payment methods include cash or a check to Missouri State University. These should be delivered to the Graduate College, Carrington 306.