PARTS OF THE THESIS

A thesis report should include three main categories of materials in this order:

• Preliminaries (front matter)

• Text (chapters)

• Reference materials The preliminaries should be arranged in the following sequence with pagination in lower-case Roman numerals at the bottom of each page. Samples of the preliminary pages are included in the Appendices section of this manual.

PRELIMINARIES

• Title Page required (page i, but not numbered)

• Copyright Page required (page ii)

• Committee Page required (page iii)

• Abstract required (page iv)

• Acknowledgments Page optional (cont. Roman numeral pagination)

• Table of Contents required (cont. Roman numeral pagination)

• List of Tables if applicable (cont. Roman numeral pagination)

• List of Figures if applicable (cont. Roman numeral pagination)

TEXT (CHAPTERS)

The chapters (text) follow with Arabic numeral page numbering.

• Text required (numbered, beginning with page 1)

REFERENCE MATERIALS • Bibliography, References, or Works Cited required (numbered) • Appendix(es) if applicable (numbered) PRELIMINARIES Sample preliminary pages appear in the Appendices section of this manual. Preliminary pages should look consistent and cohesive. Page headings should appear in all capital letters and be of the same size font. They should be centered at the top of the page, two inches from the top of the page. Preliminary pages should not include bold-face, italic, or underlined font. THESIS FORMATTING GUIDELINES | 9 TITLE PAGE The Title Page should look exactly like the Sample Title Page in the Appendices of this manual. The title should be worded exactly the same way on the Title, Committee Membership, and Abstract Pages, but should appear in all capital letters on the Title Page. COPYRIGHT PAGE A Copyright Page is required in your Master’s thesis. Master’s theses are automatically under copyright protection as soon as they appear in a tangible form. They do not have to be registered through the U.S. Copyright Office to be copyright protected; however, for those who want to register the copyright, the procedure and forms are on the U.S. Copyright Office website: copyright.gov. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP PAGE This page lists the thesis title, author, date submitted, and committee members’ full names and titles. This page should be formatted to exactly match the sample page found in the Appendices of this manual. ABSTRACT The Abstract is a concise and descriptive summary of the work completed. It should explain the work rather than defend or evaluate it. It should begin with the most important information, which will usually be the conclusions or findings, followed by a brief but precise statement of the problem; a description of the research method and design, if applicable; and the significance of your conclusions. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS This is an optional page. If used, it expresses appreciation for guidance and assistance. Although not required, the recognition of the generosity of time and knowledge of the people who helped is a courtesy. It should be simple and sincere. TABLE OF CONTENTS The Table of Contents must provide the page location of the List of Tables (if included), List of Figures (if included), each chapter or section and sub-sections, as well as Bibliography/References, and Appendix(es) (if included). No other preliminary page listings other than the List of Tables and List of Figures should be included on this page (\*for exceptions, please see note below). Use of leader dots and spacing in the Table of Contents are optional and at the discretion of the writer and their committee. LIST OF TABLES A table is a columnar arrangement of written material or data, organized to save space and convey relationships at a glance. All table labels listed in the List of Tables must be written exactly as they appear within the text. Table labels should appear above tables in the body of the thesis. Tables must be listed in the List of Tables with the exact corresponding page number. Include a List of Tables even if there is only one table in the document. LIST OF FIGURES Charts, graphs, maps, and illustrations of other kinds should be grouped and labeled as figures. All figure labels listed in the List of Figures must be written exactly as they appear within the text. Figure labels should appear below figure images in the body of the thesis. Figures must be listed in the List of Figures with the exact corresponding page number. Include a List of Figures even if there is only one figure in the document. \*Note: If your thesis includes a list of nomenclature and symbols, include the list as an appendix or after the List of Figures. If included after the List of Figures, include an entry for your List of Nomenclature or List of Symbols in the Table of Contents after the List of Figures and before Chapter 1 of the text. BODY OF TEXT The text, or body, of a thesis begins on page 1, which directly follows the preliminaries. In the body of the thesis, page numbers must appear as Arabic numerals. Page number placement must be consistent throughout the document. The specific work presented will determine the nature and the organization of the thesis report. The Thesis Committee will have suggestions concerning its design and layout. THESIS FORMATTING GUIDELINES | 10 BIBLIOGRAPHY, REFERENCES, OR WORKS CITED References should contain only those works cited within the text. A Bibliography is any list of references at the end of a text, whether cited or not. It includes works used, additional background reading, and any other material deemed appropriate for background reading. If a source is cited within the text, it must be listed in the References or Bibliography sections. Students may follow APA, MLA, and Chicago styles for referencing and bibliographical entries. If the student’s department requires an alternative style, it may be used for referencing and bibliographical entries, but formatting should follow the guidelines outlined above and should be consistent. Only one Bibliography, References, or Works Cited section may appear in the thesis. APPENDICES An appendix should include materials that supplement the main text. Original data, summary tabulations, complicated mathematical proofs, descriptions of equipment, very lengthy quotations, supporting legal decisions or laws, supplementary illustrative materials, computer printouts, questionnaires, and other such documents belong in an appendix. If a document contains two or more appendices, each appendix should be assigned a letter, given a title, and listed by letter and title in the Table of Contents. SUPPLEMENTARY FILES Supplementary files are intended to enhance the full text of the submission and should be considered essential supporting material. The student’s faculty committee is responsible for deciding whether this material is essential to the thesis. Each supplementary file should be listed as a separate appendix. IMAGES AND MULTIMEDIA FILE FORMATS Students interested in including a multimedia object as a supplementary file to their theses are encouraged to read the DigitalCommons@ CalPoly FAQs section at digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/faq.html#faq-35 and to work with their advisor, in addition to the DigitalCommons@ CalPoly library administrators, with regard to this possibility. TROUBLESHOOTING COMMON PROBLEMS The thesis should be proofread carefully prior to submission to the Graduate Education Office. It is suggested that a spell checker be used and that the document be reviewed by others for flow and formatting. The following are the most common errors found in theses: • Missing or incorrectly formatted preliminary pages • Pagination erratic or incorrectly located on pages • Tables or Figures missing captions; captions in the wrong place in text; captions not agreeing with the List of Tables or List of Figures • References cited in the text but missing in the Bibliography • Misspelled words • Grammatical errors • Font size that is too large (larger than 10 to 12 point font) COPYRIGHT Cal Poly students are responsible for submitting their own Master’s theses. The student must grant the University permission to reproduce and distribute the work electronically.