

DESCRIPTION OF "DISSERTATION" TEMPLATE FOR WORD FOR WINDOWS

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Original version: 2001

Updated: 2005

1 Personal notes

Well, you've done it. You've worked hard and long for the Ph.D., and now it's time to start writing the dissertation. Furthermore, you've decided to use Word for Windows (instead of Latex) to write it. This means you could use a dissertation template of some sort, which brings us to the current discussion.

When I started working on my dissertation in the spring of 2001, I discovered, to my surprise, that there were no Word templates available that fulfilled the requirements of a UTD dissertation. Oh, there were guidelines for setting the margins, the page numbers, fonts, and a whole host of things too numerous to mention. The Office of Graduate Studies will be happy to provide you with a little booklet that describes these things in detail. But that's not the same thing as having a template that sets up the basic document for you, one that you know is correct. Wouldn't it be nice to let go of all the worries about margin settings and the like, so you can focus on the task at hand: Getting the dissertation written? I thought so. To facilitate this, I've incorporated the various settings I used with my dissertation into a Word document template that is included with this file. It worked very well for me, and I believe it will for you too.

Although I can't claim that this template is perfect or is even the best available, I can claim that it will pass the formatting requirements of a UTD dissertation. If you will follow the directions I give you below for its use, this template will not only set the margins, fonts, and other formatting for you, but it will also automatically number your chapters, sub-sections, and figures. In addition, the creation of a table of contents and a table of figures is much simplified. All you have to do is supply the content, and this template will make sure that that content is put together properly. I hope that with a little effort on your part to learn how to use it, it will make the process of writing a dissertation significantly easier and save you quite a bit of time in producing the final document.

Best of luck!

2 Warning and disclaimer

I am providing this template to UTD with the understanding that it is intended as an aid only. The user will have to take responsibility for detecting and fixing any mistakes.

Please note that using a Word template is a non-trivial operation. To use it successfully you need to have at least an average working knowledge of Word for Windows, and with Windows in general. For example, it is assumed that the user knows basic operations within Word, such as traversing the menus, setting styles, working with fonts, working with fields, etc. I will include some brief descriptions of some of these items, but in general, writing complete descriptions of basic Word and Windows operations is beyond the scope of this write-up.

Although this template will create a dissertation that is acceptable to UTD, there may be some aspects of it that you would like to change. Perhaps you'd like to use a different font, or a slightly different margin. This is fine. The template can be modified to create almost anything you want. But make sure you know what you are doing if you make any significant changes, especially with the use of styles and outline numbering. Many of the nice features, such as the ability to generate an entire table of contents with the click of a mouse, are keyed to the style and outline settings. You can change these in the document or the template, but if they are changed improperly, the related functions may not work.

Keep in mind that minor variations can appear in the end product for reasons that have nothing to do with the template. For example, one printer might format margins slightly