

THESIS AND DISSERTATION GUIDELINES

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Introduction

The SJSU Master's Thesis and Doctoral Dissertation Guidelines (hereafter "Guidelines") provide general guidance for authors of master's theses, doctoral dissertations, and creative project reports prepared under the Plan A or Plan C culminating experience requirement at San José State University (SJSU). The Guidelines were developed for use for graduate students and their advisors to ensure that their thesis/dissertation meets 1) SJSU requirements, 2) Montezuma Publishing (hereafter "Publisher") formatting requirements (as established by SJSU), and 3) SJSU library requirements. Note that when the Guidelines refer to "thesis," they also pertain to creative project reports completed under Plan C.

Timeline

1. You must be aware of the submission and publication deadlines. Deadlines change each Fall, Spring, and Summer semester.

2. Submission must be in the semester in which the student plans to graduate (and has filed the appropriate graduation form with GAPE). Extensions will not be granted. In order to meet deadlines, you must allow enough time to

- prepare your draft, using the appropriate style and format;
- meet deadlines imposed by your thesis or dissertation committee members;
- defend your thesis or dissertation;
- have all committee member revisions completed in time to meet the posted deadline for submission to the College of Graduate Studies. You may not submit to the College of Graduate Studies until all of your committee members sign the Committee Approval Form, and the thesis or dissertation is in final form, and
- make all format edits by the timeline set by Publisher. This will enable your work to be published by the publication deadline for your semester graduation.

Committee Structure

[University policy S14-10](#) sets the requirements for a thesis or dissertation committee composition. S14-10 also specifies the rights of students and faculty with respect to service requirements of committee members, removal of committee members, and ownership of the research program. Dismissal of a committee chair supervising the thesis or dissertation research might lead to a prohibition of the student from continuing to report on that research.

A master's thesis committee will be composed of between three and five members. Exceptions can be made only with the approval of the College of Graduate Studies.

The chairperson of the thesis committee must hold a permanent (tenured or tenure track) San José State University faculty appointment. Emeritus and FERPing (those in the Faculty Early Retirement Program) San José State University faculty may serve as chairs with the consent of their department chairs or school directors.

Qualified individuals, including part-time temporary faculty and non-faculty with expertise related to the thesis topic, may serve as thesis committee members.

At least half of the thesis committee must hold a San José State University faculty appointment.

Authorship

All theses and dissertations must be single authored. The writing must be entirely by that author. Group projects are not allowed. If the project reported on was part of a multi-project research activity, the work performed by the individual author must be extracted as the thesis or dissertation report.

A published report of the work can be used for the thesis or dissertation in part or whole. The student must be the first (lead) author of that publication. A supervising professor or other university-sanctioned authority (*e.g.*, the head of an off-campus laboratory in which the student has conducted his or her research) can be included in the author list of the publication, although not in the thesis or dissertation. Other authors cannot be included unless the contributions to the writing and research are relatively minor. An explanation of their roles must be included with thesis submission.

Manuscript Preparation - Format and Style

All theses and dissertations must follow the [SJSU 14 Formatting Rules](#) regardless of style guide or journal instructions. Front pages (title page, copyright page, committee approval page, abstract, acknowledgement page, table of contents, list of tables, list of figures, and list of abbreviations (if used) must follow the College of Graduate Studies approved format so that all theses and dissertations published from San José State University form a cohesive body.

Choice of Style Guide

Students should work with their committee members to select a style guide (or journal format) that is acceptable to the department. Publisher allows use of only the most current versions of style guides (available at the time of submission to the College of Graduate Studies).

If a department follows a style guide other than the commonly accepted guides or uses the format specific to a journal from a discipline for the master's thesis, it is the student's responsibility to submit examples of the departmental style guide or journal instructions and sample article to the College of Graduate Studies at the time of submission.

Journal Format

A journal article is not a thesis or dissertation. Journal articles should have a minimum of three chapters Introduction (or Literature Review), Journal Article, and Conclusion). If a journal format is selected for an article incorporated into the thesis, the journal article incorporated into the thesis should follow the article's author's instructions and follow the selected sample article's formatting, with these exceptions:

- The front pages, *i.e.*, those pages that precede the introduction of the thesis or dissertation;
- Double column layouts are not usually permitted even if they are allowed by a journal. If there appears to be a need for a column format, please contact GS for permission. In the absence of permission, the content of the thesis or dissertation should appear in a single column;
- Figures and tables must be inserted in the text shortly after their citation even though a journal may specify that they be placed at the end of the text.

Preface Requirement - Creative Works (Thesis)

Some Plan A theses and all Plan C creative projects are considered non-traditional theses and may include poetry collections, short story collections, screenplays, musical creations, and other creative work. The College of Graduate Studies requires that these works contain a preface of no less than five pages that should put the work in context for the reader, whether it be historical, cultural, societal, or other contexts.

Body of the Thesis or Dissertation

The style or journal formatting guide of choice dictates the organization of the body of the thesis or dissertation and its division into chapters or sections.

Headings and Subheadings

Headings and subheadings should follow the style or journal formatting guide of choice. In the event no such rules exist (Chicago Manual Style is an example), then select a style for headings and subheadings that is used consistently throughout the body of your work. Do not extend subheadings beyond five levels. All headings and

subheadings as they appear in the body of your work should appear in your Table of Contents. The Table of Contents, however, will not use boldface or italic fonts.

Tables and Figures

Tables and figures (graphs, photographs, maps, drawings, and so forth) cited within the thesis or dissertation must appear within the document (not as part of the appendix or after the body text) directly after the initial reference to them. The same data cannot be reported in multiple illustration forms; that is, authors must choose either a table or figure to represent information; they cannot choose both.

Captions. Follow your style or journal guidelines for the placement of captions on tables and figures. Where no guidelines exist, table captions should appear above the table, and figure captions should appear below the figure.

Table and Figure Citations. All tables and figures must be cited, and cited in order, in the body of the document prior to the placement of the figure or table.

When a table or figure has been taken from another source, a proper citation must be provided (*e.g.*, reprinted with permission from..., modified from..., adapted from...). Formatting of the citation depends on the preferences of the copyright owner. If a source is indicated and thus a copyrighted work is reproduced in the thesis or dissertation, then permission from the original copyright owner is needed. Evidence of that permission must be submitted to the College of Graduate Studies at the time of the thesis or dissertation submission. Any reprinted work requiring permission, for which none was obtained, must be removed from your work.

New sections can begin only with text and not with a figure or table (figures and tables must be cited before their placement).

Formulas and Equations. Formulas and equations that appear in your text should follow your selected style or journal guidelines. Where not specifically set out in either your style or journal guidelines, formula and equation style should be approved by your committee chair and recognized for your discipline.

Supplementary Material

Relevant supplementary materials must be attached as a separate file when your document is submitted to the College of Graduate Studies. Supplementary materials may be audio and/or video recordings or oversized figures such as maps.

Editing and Formatting Assistance

In addition to your committee, the [Writing Center](#) is an excellent resource and has writing tutors to assist you in drafting your thesis or dissertation.

Publisher provides editing services and formatting services for those students who wish to utilize them. Explanations, Publisher's requirements, and costs for these services are available [here](#).

A list of common writing errors in Master's theses and dissertations can be found under Resources within this Google site.

Submission to the College of Graduate Studies

The following documents must be submitted to the College of Graduate Studies by the posted deadline for the semester in which you are graduating. Each document must be provided in one email to thesis@sjsu.edu and be labeled in the conventions outlined below.

Thesis or Dissertation. You may submit your thesis as either a PDF or Word document and must be labeled "last name_first name_thesis (or dissertation). Google Docs are not allowed.

Thesis/Dissertation Information Form. Complete all of the fields of information. Correctly state the name of your program. Select your format guide or provide departmental guidelines (must provide style for headings, citations, and references). If using a journal article as a format guideline, submit links to Author guidelines and a sample article. Indicate if you are required to submit copyright permissions or protocol approvals. This form is a guiding document provided to Publisher. Missing or incorrect information on this form will result in a delay in your document review. This document must be labeled "last name_first name_Information."

Committee Approval Form. You must defend your thesis or dissertation and make any required changes prior to submission to the College of Graduate Studies. Committee members may sign the Committee Approval Form electronically or with a wet signature. The document must be labeled "last name_first name_Committee."

SJSU License Agreement Form. All theses and dissertations are published through ProQuest and downloaded to SJSU ScholarWorks. The College of Graduate Studies will forward this form to the MLK Library. It communicates the level of access you want others to have to your work. You may choose between SJSU access only (only SJSU faculty, staff, and students would have access to view a full text version of the document) or worldwide access (anyone searching the library catalog would have access to view a full-text version). An embargo option is also available allowing the student to delay publication of all parts of the thesis or dissertation, including its title, author, and abstract, in 6-month increments for up to 5 years (University Policy S14-10). You must sign the form electronically or with a wet signature. The terms of this license will be

used by Publisher to set publishing guidelines in ProQuest. The document must be labeled “last name_first name_License.”

Research Protocol Documents, if required. These include your IRB, IACUC, or Biological Use Information forms. The documents must be labeled “last name_first name_Research.”

Copyright Permissions, if required. Read our [policies](#) regarding copyrighted materials. A single pdf document, with all permissions must be labeled “last name_first name_Permissions.”

Publisher Review

After submission to the College of Graduate Studies, your thesis or dissertation will undergo a format review by Publisher. Publisher does not review content. Publisher will contact you directly with required edits before publication. You will have two weeks to complete those edits and return your thesis or dissertation to Publisher for a second review before the publication deadline. Publisher will review your thesis or dissertation until such time as they reach 20 formatting errors. At that time, Publisher will return the document to you for correction.

The first two reviews by Publisher are at no charge to you. If Publisher requires additional rounds of formatting edits, for each submission thereafter, you will be charged an additional fee.

See Format [Review and Publication Process and Fees](#) in the Thesis and Dissertation Guide Google site.

Publication

Once your thesis or dissertation has passed Publisher’s format review, Publisher will submit your document to ProQuest on your behalf. The \$45.00 fee required by ProQuest must be paid to Publisher by **3:00 p.m.** on or before the publication date for graduation in your chosen semester. Thereafter, the College of Graduate Studies will publish your thesis or dissertation.

Completion of Culminating Experience and Graduation

Your thesis or dissertation chair and Program Coordinator may enter your grade and complete a culminating experience memo for submission to Graduate and Admissions Program Evaluation (GAPE) at the time you submit your work to the College of Graduate Studies.

Your degree will be not be awarded until your thesis or dissertation has been accepted for publication. If you are unable to complete the publisher's required corrections before the publication deadline for the current semester, your degree will issue in the next cycle after the thesis/dissertation is accepted for publication. In this situation you will not be required to remain continuously enrolled via 1290R for subsequent semesters as long as your thesis or dissertation, including full approval from your committee of both the thesis/dissertation and the defense, was submitted to the College of Graduate Studies by the submission deadline.

