

Northern Illinois University



The Graduate School

Guidelines for Preparing and Submitting Electronic Theses and Dissertations

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Introduction

The NIU Graduate Council has declared that "a thesis will be a scholarly contribution to knowledge. Its subject must be in the area of the student's major and be approved by the student's thesis director and, ultimately, by the thesis advisory committee. The thesis presents research that has been conducted under the supervision of a graduate faculty member from the student's major department approved as the thesis director. The document may not have been published previously, and the research must be successfully defended in an oral examination." (See the [Graduate Catalog](#) for university requirements regarding collaborative thesis research.)

Similarly, the Graduate Council has stated that "a dissertation will be a substantial contribution to knowledge, in which the student exhibits original scholarship and the ability to conduct independent research." All the stipulations regarding theses in the paragraph above also apply to dissertations.

A "thesis" is the research paper required for some master's degree programs. The term "dissertation" is used exclusively for the doctoral degree research paper. The word "thesis" will be used to refer to both theses and dissertations in the following guidelines.

Students are responsible for satisfying all requirements for the thesis that may be specific or unique to their departments of study, in addition to those for the preparation and submission of theses contained in this document.

It is Graduate School policy that published manuscripts are not acceptable in fulfilling the thesis requirements for graduate degree programs. It is permissible to have had portions of the thesis material published, but the thesis as a whole must be original and may not have been published previously.

"Thesis and dissertation advisor" refers to specific staff within the Graduate School, referred to as "Thesis Advisor" in the following guidelines. The faculty member supervising the work is referred to as the "Director."

Academic Integrity

Student papers are to be prepared with integrity. Plagiarism is the attempt to present another's work as one's own. Plagiarism includes copying or paraphrasing material from books, periodicals, or other sources without identifying and acknowledging these sources.

Plagiarism, falsification of data, or other research misconduct may result in a thesis being declared unacceptable. Further, the student may be subject to suspension or dismissal from the university, revocation of the degree, or other sanctions.

Research Conduct and Use of Human Subjects

Any NIU graduate student who proposes to undertake research involving human subjects is required to obtain university approval for the project **before the data collection phase begins**. Research using questionnaires, evaluations, or surveys—mailed or otherwise conducted—or involving personal interviews is included in the category of human subjects research.

A graduate student who proposes to engage in research utilizing living animals or recombinant DNA must receive university approval before that research is begun.

Forms requesting approval for research involving human subjects, live animals, or recombinant DNA may be obtained from most departmental offices or from the [Graduate School Office of Research Compliance](#). A thesis will not be reviewed until all necessary approvals are on file in the Graduate School.

Calendar

It is the student's responsibility to obtain a copy of the current [Graduation Deadlines](#) and to adhere to required deadlines. Deadlines will **not** be waived because the student has failed to allow sufficient time for manuscript preparation, editing, and revision.

If students defend on or near the final deadline for submission of the paper to

the Graduate School, it is still the student's responsibility to meet this deadline. A paper that does not conform to the guidelines presented here will not be considered to have met the deadline for submission of the post-defense version.

Style

All papers are to be written with spelling, grammar, syntax, and punctuation consistent with Standard American Edited English for academic audiences, except for foreign-language citations and quotations and except for theses within the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, which may be partially or wholly in the language appropriate to the degree.

Style Manuals

The default documentation style of the Graduate School is APA 5th edition, but the Graduate School does not specify a particular manual of style because different disciplines follow different practices. A department may designate a style appropriate to its scholarly literature. In cases where the department's preferred style differs in its format requirements (i.e., margins, pagination, line spacing) from the Graduate School guidelines presented here, **Graduate School requirements take precedence.**

In any case, the student is required to be consistent in the use of the style adopted. The student must also follow the most current edition of any style manual. If a student has questions regarding style manuals or documentation, a Graduate School Thesis Advisor should be consulted.

Theses in Foreign Languages and Literatures

If the primary language of the thesis is **not** English, an additional copy of the abstract in English must be included with the document.

Versions of Papers: Definitions

Draft version (Doctoral students only): Three weeks prior to the defense, a draft copy of the dissertation (on paper) must be submitted to the Graduate School, Office of the Associate Dean. This copy is for use by the Dean's designated reader, who will attend the oral defense. The draft version should be substantively complete with respect to research methods, results, and analysis, including relevant figures, data, and references, but at the discretion of the department may be in unfinished form with respect to format. The draft version is **not** reviewed by a Thesis Advisor.

Post-defense version: The post-defense version reflects all substantive revisions required for approval by the student's committee. It has been prepared according to Graduate School Guidelines and is subject only to changes requested by the Thesis Advisor.

Final corrected version: The final corrected version incorporates corrections of all errors identified by a Thesis Advisor. This version is subject to final approval by a Thesis Advisor, after which it is deposited electronically in a digital library of electronic theses and dissertations, a service of ProQuest, formerly University Microfilms.

Basic Procedures for Submission

Papers are read in the order in which they are submitted (uploaded). Therefore, early submission is recommended. Also, papers of students who are candidates for the current term's graduation will be given priority over papers of students who are candidates for a later graduation date. When a paper has been read by a Thesis Advisor, the author will be contacted by e-mail and given further instructions.

Graduate School Approval

The Thesis Advisor will inspect the final corrected version and certify satisfactory compliance with required format. The student will receive e-mail notification when final approval has been granted. In order to graduate in a particular term, the final corrected version must be uploaded by the date specified in the current Graduation Deadlines for that term.

Freelance Formatters and Editors

For the convenience of students, the Graduate School maintains a list of [freelancers](#) who have indicated their availability and interest in formatting theses. The student is not limited to this list in selecting a freelancer. Hiring a professional freelancer does not absolve students of the responsibility to assure the paper meets the standards and requirements of the Graduate School. Likewise, the Graduate School cannot assume responsibility for the quality of work done by a freelancer on the list.

It is strongly recommended that students confer with the freelancer about rates, schedules, and details of the particular manuscript before formatting actually begins so that both parties will have a firm understanding about the work to be performed and the charges to be paid. Deadlines will **not** be waived because the student has failed to allow sufficient time for the freelancer to complete the work.

Binderies

NIU does not provide a bindery service to students. A student who wishes to obtain bound copies for presentation or personal distribution must arrange for binding. ProQuest offers this service as an option during the submission

process. Other companies also provide this service:

www.houchenbindery.com

www.librarybinding.com

www.thesisondemand.com

Organization

A thesis is organized in the following order:

abstract

title page (p. i)

Acknowledgements (optional, p. ii)

Dedication (optional, p. iii)

Table of Contents (p. ii, iii, or iv)

List of Tables (if necessary)

List of Figures (if necessary)

List of Appendices (if necessary)

Preface (optional)

main body of thesis (begins on p. 1)

References/Bibliography

appendices (if applicable)

** Please note that links to resources and examples appear in blue in this document. Click on the word or phrase in blue to reveal the resource or example. These links are only operable when viewed online. A printed copy of this document will not show the resources or examples.*

Abstract

There is no word limit on abstracts. However, print indices published by ProQuest (for example, [Dissertation Abstracts International](#)) continue to enforce limits of 350 words for doctoral dissertations and 150 words for master's theses. These print indices allow only text to be included in the abstract. Printed abstracts will be truncated if they exceed these word limits and nontext content will be removed. The abstract as you submit it will not be altered in your digitally published manuscript.

Title Page

The title page is the first page of the thesis (p. i, but the page number is suppressed). All information on this page (except the copyright statement and director information) is typed in capital letters. The front matter is paginated from this page in lowercase roman numerals.

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements recognize the persons or organizations to whom the author

is indebted for guidance and assistance, those to whom he or she is grateful for any special or nonroutine aid, and any financial support received for the work. Acknowledgements should be expressed simply, succinctly, and tactfully.

This optional page immediately follows the title page. The word ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS should appear in type consistent with that of the chapter titles.

Dedication

A dedication page is also optional and follows the acknowledgements page. The dedication is normally limited to one or two lines.

Table of Contents

The Table of Contents contains all front-matter material that follows it, such as the List of Tables, List of Figures, List of Appendices, and Preface. It also lists chapters or other main divisions, endnotes, and bibliography. Each item in the Table of Contents must be worded exactly as it is worded in the text. If some subsequent levels of headings are listed in the Table of Contents, list all such levels of headings.

Capitalize all letters of all words in first-level headings in the Table of Contents. Indent subheadings and list them under the chapter heading using upper- and lowercase letters.

A page number must be specified for each listing in the Table of Contents, including chapter titles. Single-digit page numbers should be lined up with the last digit of multiple-digit page numbers.

List of Tables

This list appears after the Table of Contents. Each title must be worded exactly as it is worded in the table, except that parenthetical information within the table that has meaning only in reference to the table need not appear in the table title in this list. All tables appearing in the text and appendices must be included on this list.

List of Figures

This list appears after the List of Tables. Each entry must be worded exactly as it is worded in the figure title, except that parenthetical information in the figure legend that has meaning only in reference to the figure need not appear in the figure title in this list. All figures appearing in the text and appendices must be included on this list.

When a figure is preceded by a cover page containing its number and legend,

this page number is the one listed in the List of Figures.

List of Appendices

If there are two or more appendices, they must appear on a List of Appendices following the List of Figures. Each title must be worded exactly as it is worded in the appendix. Each appendix must be preceded by a cover page containing its number and title.

Preface

A preface is optional and includes explanatory remarks about the background of the study. It immediately precedes Chapter 1 and is paginated as part of the front matter (with lowercase Roman numerals).

References or Bibliography

Each reference or bibliography entry should be single-spaced with a double space between entries. **An entry should not be split across a page break.**

There must be a reference entry for every citation in the text, with spelling, dates, publishing information, etc., that are correct and presented consistently. A reference list includes only those works cited in the text. A bibliography lists all works cited in the text as well as other background works relevant to the study but not otherwise cited in the text. In some academic disciplines, the term "Works Cited" or "Literature Cited" is used instead of "Bibliography" or "References."

Students must cross-check references before submitting the post-defense version for review.

Appendices

Normally, appendices are placed after the bibliography or reference list. An appendix is the appropriate location for various types of materials that are germane to the research being reported but are considered somewhat tangential to the text itself. Examples are raw data, questionnaires, letters of transmittal, etc. Sometimes material is placed in an appendix because its length would make it too intrusive if it appeared in the text. The appendices must conform to all pagination and margin guidelines but may be single or double spaced.

Each appendix should be provided with a title. When more than one appendix is included, each of the appendices must be designated by a letter (APPENDIX A, APPENDIX B, etc.) as well as by title. Each appendix must have a cover page. The appendix letter and title should be placed on a separate cover page preceding the material, centered in all capitals halfway down the page. If the

title is longer than two lines, it should be arranged in inverted pyramid style and double spaced. The page number is not printed on the cover page, but this page is counted in the pagination.

A List of Appendices in the front matter is required if the paper contains two or more appendices. Because the appendix cover page is considered the first page of the appendix, it is the number that is printed in the List of Appendices, even though the page number is suppressed on the cover page itself.

If the paper contains only one appendix, no List of Appendices is needed; in that case, the appendix would be indicated at the end of the Table of Contents.

Format

File Format

Adobe PDF is required. A free conversion tool is available on the submission site. Files may **not** be compressed (i.e., zip files) or password protected. Digital signatures are not allowed. You are wholly responsible for the appearance of your manuscript in PDF. It will appear and may be downloaded exactly as you submit it.

Multimedia Files and Formats

The following formats are acceptable with external or internal links:

Images: GIF (.gif); JPEG (.jpeg); TIFF (.tif)

Video: Apple Quick Time (.mov); Microsoft Audio Video Interleaved (.avi); MPEG (.mpeg)

Audio: AIF (.aif); CD-DA; CD-ROM/XA; MIDI (.midi); MPEG-2; SND (.snd); WAV (.wav)

See section Supplemental Materials below for additional requirements regarding media files.

Color

Native digital manuscripts will appear in color when viewed electronically. Microfilm and print reproductions will **not** preserve color; colors will appear in shades of gray and may compromise legibility of figures, illustrations, photographs, and graphics. Data and information that are color-coded or based on color shading may not be interpretable.

Supplemental Materials

The maximum file size supported by the electronic submission platform is 100 MB. A CD-ROM may be submitted as an appendix if supplementary information is so extensive that presentation in the text file is impractical or pushes the file beyond the maximum size. The CD-ROM must be labeled with the student's name, department, degree, month and year of graduation, thesis title, and (if there is more than one disc) numbered (1 of 4, 2 of 4, etc.). The thesis text should include at least one reference to each CD-ROM and should somewhere identify and describe each file (and the software that produced it) sufficiently to allow someone else to identify and retrieve the data.

Audio and video must be submitted as supplementary files to reduce the size of the main document. Upload these supplemental media files during the online submission process by following the instructions on the submission site. **All supplemental media files must be described in your abstract.** See complete instructions for uploading supplemental files in the Formatting Requirements section of the submission site resources and guidelines.

Headings

A consistent system of headings must be used throughout the thesis. The chapter number and title must be typed in the same manner for all chapters; all second-level headings within chapters must be typographically alike, and so on. The level of each heading is determined not by the length or complexity of the material that follows it but by its relationship to other headings in the system being used. All five levels of headings need not be used. Except for fifth-level headings, spacing above and below headings should be triple-spaced consistently throughout the paper to clearly distinguish the headings from the text.

A heading must always be followed by at least one line of text on the same page. If necessary, a heading at the bottom of a page should be moved to the top of the next page.

Underlining

Certain elements require underlining (also called "ruling") and should not be confused with italicization (see section Italics below). Heading levels 3-5, table titles, and figure numbers should be underlined. Underlining must be done with a solid line (spaces between underlined words must also be underlined). Do not underline terminal punctuation.

Italics

Italics should be used for titles of books and journals in the References/Bibliography and in the body of the text. Italics should also be used for

variables and statistical symbols (e.g., *t* test, *p*, etc.). Other applications of italic type are acceptable only for occasional, appropriate use.

Leader Dots

Leader dots should be used in the Table of Contents, List of Tables, List of Figures, and List of Appendices. They follow the last word of the heading or title, should be lined up under one another, and should not run directly up to the page number.

Line Spacing

All text in the main body of a thesis must be double spaced, with the exception of block quotations, table and figure titles, notes, and some tabular material, which should be single spaced.

References/Bibliography entries should be single spaced with a double space between entries. **A reference/bibliography entry should not be split across a page break.**

Block Quotations

Block quotations are single spaced, set off from the text without quotation marks, and indented. The style used for indentation spacing and spacing between quotations and text must be consistent. Be sure to identify the page number from which a quotation is taken.

Footnotes

Notes (if any) should be footnotes, placed at the bottom of the page on which the note is "called out" by a superscript numeral. Entries should be single spaced with a double space between entries.

Margins

The left margin on each page must be between 1.5 and 1.75 inches. To ensure this margin, set the left margin of your word processing program to 1.6 inches. Each of the other three margins must be between 1 and 1.25 inches. On a page that begins with a first-level heading (for example, the first page of a chapter), the top margin above the heading is to be 2 to 2.25 inches. **All text, including page numbers, footnotes, tables, and figures, must be fully within the specified margins.**

Mathematical and Chemical Notations

Symbols other than letters of the Roman alphabet and Arabic numerals should match the type style used for the rest of the thesis whenever possible and

ideally should be selected from the fonts in the program used to prepare the body of the text. Embedded fonts are required for electronic submission (see section Fonts below).

There should be spacing above, below, and between lines of mathematical or chemical notation presented on separate lines to ensure visual clarity. There should be at least two lines of space between the subscripts of one line and the superscripts of the line below.

Pagination

Except for the abstract, every page must have a number, though on certain pages the number is suppressed. Page numbers are placed in the upper right-hand corner within the 1-inch margins (i.e., a minimum of 1 inch of white space above the number and 1 inch of white space to the right of the number). Numbers may not be adorned with periods, dashes, hyphens, or letters (e.g., "43a"). **Running heads should not be used.**

Pages in the front matter are numbered with lowercase Roman numerals. Text pages are numbered with Arabic numerals. The title page is always page i and the first page of the text is always page 1. (The abstract is an independent document and is not paginated.) References and appendices pages are numbered in sequence from the last page of the text.

The following pages **do not** have page numbers printed on them: abstract pages, title page, figure legend cover pages (if used), appendix cover pages, and any page with a 2-inch top margin such as the **first page** of chapters, front matter sections (Table of Contents, List of Tables, etc.), and References or Bibliography.

Tables and Figures

Tables, including those in the appendices, are to be numbered consecutively throughout a thesis in the order in which they are first mentioned. The same is true for figures and other types of illustrations. Place the number and title of a table above the table. Place the number and title of a figure below the figure or on a cover page as described below. **The type face of table and figure titles must match that of the text.**

Tables and figures must fit within the prescribed margins. Do not reduce page numbers. Tables and figures may also be positioned horizontally on the page (called "landscape"). The top of a [landscaped table or figure](#) must run along the left margin when the page is viewed vertically. The page number must be placed within the upper right margin when the page is viewed vertically (consistent with all other page numbers).

If a table is longer than one page, it should begin at the top of a page and

continue on succeeding pages as required, with the notation "continued on following page" (in parentheses) placed a double space below the bottom of the table and a notation such as "Table 1 (continued)" at the top of succeeding pages. Notes for a table should be placed directly below that table.

If a table or figure is more than half a page in size, it should be placed by itself on the page immediately following the page on which it is first mentioned. **Continue text to the normal bottom margin on the preceding page and resume the text normally across the page break**, continuing on the page following the full-page table or figure.

If two or more small tables or figures are combined on a page, do not combine them with text. If a table or figure is no more than half a page in size, it should be combined with text whenever possible. **In all cases, tables or figures should be separated from the text and from each other by at least four lines of space.**

Do not interrupt a paragraph on a given page with the placement of a table or figure. Finish the paragraph before positioning the table or figure. **If there is not sufficient space on the page to place the table or figure, continue text to the normal bottom margin and place the table or figure on the next page.**

When a table or figure is referred to in the text, the reference should be to the table number, not to "the table below." If a figure legend appears on a cover sheet, the page number **is not** printed on the cover sheet, but a page number **is** printed on the page on which the figure appears. However, the page number of the cover sheet is the number that appears on the List of Figures. If a cover sheet is used for any figure, **all** figures in the paper must have cover sheets.

Fonts

A standard font (such as Times New Roman) of either 10- or 12-point size should be used. The same font must be used throughout the thesis, with the exception of material contained within tables or figures. Italics and boldface are acceptable only for occasional, appropriate use.

All fonts must be embedded. Manuscripts without embedded fonts may cause ALL punctuation and formatting to disappear when the document is printed from the digital file. This guide assumes you are writing your manuscript in MS Word on a PC. If you are using a Mac, similar guidance should exist in help files.

To begin, create your manuscript using a TrueType font—**not** a scalable font. Select one of the following:

*Arial 10pt
Century 11pt

*Courier New 10pt
Garamond 12pt
***Georgia 11pt**
Microsoft Sans Serif 10pt
Tahoma 10pt
*Times New Roman 12pt (preferred)
*Trebuchet MS 10pt
*Verdana 10pt

* Web font designed for easy screen readability. Because many readers are likely to view and/or use your thesis on-screen, you may wish to improve the readability of your text by using one of these fonts.

To embed the font:

1. On the Tools menu, click Options, and then click the Save tab.
2. Select the Embed TrueType fonts.
3. Save the document.

Copyright

Under federal law, the author of a thesis automatically has ownership rights and copyright protection for that paper. A student who wishes to declare this may insert a copyright notice on the title page.

Additional legal protection may be obtained by registering the thesis with the U.S. Copyright Office of the Library of Congress. ProQuest offers this service for an additional fee during the submission process, but the Graduate School does not require copyright registration.