Thesis, Dissertation, or Project Guide Updated Summer 2013

George Mason University



A GUIDE FOR PREPARATION AND FORMATTING

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Introduction

The thesis, dissertation, or project should demonstrate a student's ability to carry out independent research. This research should be closely related to the student's general academic objectives and should contribute creatively to knowledge. The student should select research topics as early as possible in his or her graduate career in consultation with an advisor. When choosing a topic, the student should take into consideration his or her background and interests, ability to handle the problem, accessibility of research materials, and probable significance of the project. Early formation of the topic enables the student to acquire the necessary tools of research, such as languages, statistics, or other procedures that will ensure successful completion of the project. A well-conceived plan of graduate study is of the utmost importance.

Regulations contained in this guide apply to all theses and dissertations, and to some projects, submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the master's or doctoral degree at George Mason University. This guide describes the required format of the thesis or dissertation (or project), notes the arrangement of contents, and discusses procedures concerning final submission, preservation, and access. This guide is not designed to instruct the student how to write a thesis or dissertation or to prescribe exactly the form that the notes or bibliography should follow; these issues differ by discipline. All questions concerning the content of the thesis or dissertation and its organization should be resolved with the student's committee.

Because the thesis or dissertation is considered a professional contribution, the student should follow the method of annotation that his or her department/discipline/committee has designated as acceptable. The student is responsible for obtaining any necessary permissions for the use of published or unpublished material and for crediting permissions in the thesis or dissertation. If the student has any questions about copyright issues, he/she should contact Claudia Holland in the Copyright Resources office by phone (703-993-2544) or email (chollan3@gmu.edu).

Again: the student should be familiar with the contents of his or her department/discipline/committee's stylistic regulations. In addition to these specific requirements, George Mason University requires strict adherence to university format regulations, which are described in this guide. In order to ensure adherence to university guidelines, all dissertations, theses, and projects must be reviewed by the University Dissertation and Thesis Coordinator prior to final submission. For more information concerning format review and final submission requirements, please contact University Dissertation and Thesis Services at 703-993-2222. University Dissertation and Thesis Services' web site can be found at http://thesis.gmu.edu.

Committees and Proposals

Thesis Committee

After the initial consultation on the topic with the major advisor, the master's thesis committee is formally named by the candidate's department chair, who also designates the major professor as chair of the master's thesis committee. The committee consists of at least three persons, one of whom may be chosen from outside the department and may be from outside the university. The committee must be formally appointed before the thesis proposal is approved.

Dissertation Committee

The graduate dean or director appoints the doctoral supervisory committee upon the recommendation of the department chair. The committee consists of a professor from the department of the student's major and at least two other members of the graduate faculty, one of whom must be outside the doctoral

student's department. Additional members may be appointed who are from outside the university. A professor from the student's major department must chair the committee.

Procedure for Submitting the Thesis or Dissertation Proposal

Proposals for theses, dissertations, and projects are not subject to format review by the University Dissertation and Thesis Coordinator. Students should contact their department or program office for instructions regarding the proper format and submission process for proposals. These instructions will vary by department and program.

Preparing the Manuscript

Arrangement of Contents

A thesis or dissertation has three major divisions: preliminary pages, text, and reference material. The appendices (if included) follow the body of the thesis or dissertation; they, in turn, are followed by the reference material, then by the student's biography. Although these divisions are not so labeled in the thesis or dissertation, the terms are used here for the sake of convenience.

The Preliminary Pages

The preliminary pages come before the body (chapter material) of the dissertation, thesis, or project. Page numbers for these sections should be placed1 inch from the bottom center of the page, and pagination in this section should use consecutive lowercase Roman numerals, beginning with the page following the Title Page. That page, whether it is the Copyright Page, Dedication Page, Acknowledgements Page, or Table of Contents, will be page "ii."

The preliminary pages include the following, in the order given:

- 1. *Signature Sheet (required): not paginated
- 2. *Title Page (required): not paginated
- 3. Copyright Page (optional): paginated
- 4. Dedication Page (optional): paginated
- 5. Acknowledgements page: (optional): paginated
- 6. *Table of Contents: (required): paginated
- 7. List of Tables (required if Tables are present in the body): paginated
- 8. List of Figures (required if Figures are present in the body): paginated
- 9. List of Abbreviations and/or Symbols (if used): paginated
- 10. *Abstract: (required): not paginated, but listed with a roman numeral in the Table of Contents

*Note: Pages marked with an asterisk are required elements for **all** dissertations, theses, and projects. If certain optional pages are not used, page numbering still begins with "ii" on the page following the Title Page and continues in ascending order (iii, iv, v...). The Abstract is not paginated but is listed in the Table of Contents with the numeral it would be assigned as the last page of the preliminary pages.

Signature Sheet

The function of the Signature Sheet is to enable the student's committee members to indicate that the manuscript satisfies the thesis or dissertation degree requirement. It includes the title of the thesis or dissertation, the student's name, and places for the required signatures (see Sample A for sample Signature Sheet). The signatures on all copies should be original and in black ink, and the page itself can be printed on any type of paper.

Please note that this page is not counted or numbered.

Title Page

The Title Page is counted as page i, but the number is not printed on the page. The first line of the title should begin 2 inches from the top edge of the page. The date listed on the Title Page should be the semester and the year in which the student plans to graduate.

Copyright Page (optional)

If the candidate chooses to place a Copyright Page in the dissertation, thesis, or project, the Copyright Page is counted and numbered as ii (see Sample C for sample copyright page). The first line of text on this page should begin 4 inches from the top edge of the page. This is an optional page and is numbered.

Information regarding copyright protection and application for copyright may be obtained from the U.S. Copyright Office, 202-707-3000, or from the Copyright Resources office on campus. Students and faculty should contact Claudia Holland in Copyright Resources by phone (703-993-2544) or email (chollan3@gmu.edu) with any questions.

The Dedication Page (optional)

This page provides the student with an opportunity to give a special tribute to persons, organizations, etc. that provided encouragement during the student's academic career. If such a page is used, the word "Dedication" should be centered, without punctuation, 2 inches from the top of the page (See Sample D for sample Dedication Page). The single-spaced text of the dedication should begin on the fourth line below the heading. This is an optional page and is numbered.

The Acknowledgements Page (optional)

An Acknowledgements Page, in which the student expresses recognition of and appreciation for any special assistance, is optional but is customarily included. The Acknowledgements Page is obligatory if special permission has been granted to use published or unpublished material. If such a page is used, the word "Acknowledgements" should be centered, without punctuation, 2 inches from the top edge of the page (See Sample E for sample Acknowledgements Page). The single-spaced text of the Acknowledgements should begin on the fourth line below the heading. This is an optional page and is numbered.

Table of Contents

This page should be headed "Table of Contents," with the heading centered, without punctuation, 2 inches from the top edge of the page. Three spaces below the heading, there should be the right-justified word "Page," which should be placed directly above the page numbers themselves. The listings will begin on the next line (four spaces below the heading). The Table of Contents lists all material following the contents page; there should not be a listing in the Table of Contents FOR the Table of Contents. The titles of chapters or parts or sections, except the Biography, must be listed and worded exactly as they appear in the body of the manuscript. The page number for each part is listed flush against the right margin and below the right-justified heading "Page." Any space between the last word of a section title and the page number should be filled with spaced periods (see Sample F for sample Table of Contents).

Lists of Tables / Figures / Symbols and/or Abbreviations / Equations

If Tables and Figures appear in the thesis, dissertation, or project, then the student should create two separate lists, one for Tables, and one for Figures. The format for the List of Tables and the List of Figures is the same as that for the Table of Contents.

The List of Abbreviations and/or Symbols should follow the form normally used in the student's discipline (see Sample G for sample lists). This list is not required, even if abbreviations and/or symbols are included in the document; the student may use his/her own judgment as to whether its inclusion is warranted, necessary, or useful.

Students who include equations in the body of their documents may wish to include a List of Equations in the preliminary pages, but doing so is not required.

The Abstract

The Abstract consists of an essay-style summary of the thesis or dissertation, a statement of the experiment or problem, the procedure followed, the results, and the conclusion. It should be a succinct account, allowing readers to decide whether the full contents will aid their study. Diagrams or other illustrated materials and formulas or equations in the abstracts should be avoided (see Sample H for sample Abstract).

The Abstract should begin with the word "Abstract," centered 2 inches below the top edge of the page. The Abstract is not numbered but is listed in the Table of Contents with a roman numeral. The following items are left-aligned: the title (all in capital letters); candidate's name and degree to be awarded; the name of the institution and year of completion; and the name of the thesis or dissertation director. The text of the abstract is double-spaced throughout.

Abstracts of theses and dissertations will be visible (without revision or editing) in MARS, whether the student elects to delay the availability of his/her work through an embargo.

Abstracts of dissertations will be published in ProQuest without revision or editing. This step (submission to ProQuest) is required of all doctoral students.

Format and Appearance

Format Review

All dissertations, theses, and projects will be subject to format review by the Dissertation and Thesis Coordinator. During format review, the Coordinator examines the component parts of the thesis or dissertation (the preliminary pages, any figures and tables, the text of the body, and the back matter) for compliance with GMU regulations for appearance and layout. Please contact the Dissertation and Thesis Coordinator at 703-993-2222 or udts@gmu.edu for more information.

It is highly recommended that students submit their work for format review (even if it is not the very final version) as early as possible in order to avoid end-of-semester delays. Appointments are not required for format reviews; when students are ready to submit their documents, they should email their theses, dissertations, and projects to the UDTS Coordinator, Sally R. Evans, at udts@gmu.edu.

The Text

The body of the thesis or dissertation is double-spaced. Each new chapter of the manuscript begins on a new page. The heading for each new chapter is centered, without punctuation, 2 inches below the top of the page. The first line of text, whether it is the first sentence, a quotation, or a subheading, begins four spaces below the heading. The pages of the text are numbered consecutively in Arabic numerals from the first page of the text through the References and the Biography.

Margins

The following margins must be observed throughout the entire document:

Top: 1.25"

Bottom: 1.25"

Left: 1.5"

Right: 1"

All tables and figures should conform to this margin requirement. Photographic reduction, where necessary, is acceptable.

Pagination

Every page on which any text, figure, table, or drawing appears is counted and numbered, with the following exceptions: the Signature Sheet is neither counted nor numbered; the Title Page is counted but not numbered; the Abstract is counted but not numbered. All numbers throughout the document are placed, without punctuation, in the bottom center of the page, 1 inch from the bottom edge.

The preliminary pages (those preceding the text of the thesis or dissertation) are numbered consecutively in lowercase Roman numerals. The first page to be numbered is the first page following the title page, and it is always numbered ii, regardless of what page it is (Copyright, Dedication, Acknowledgements, or Table of Contents). The text and reference pages are numbered consecutively in Arabic numerals, beginning with 1 on the first page of the text.

Footnotes and Endnotes

Annotation practices differ widely among the disciplines. The student should follow the practice most commonly used in his or her discipline. If foot- or endnotes are used, they are usually placed on the pages they annotate and should be separated from the text by a line extending 2 inches from the left margin. If the discipline requires notes at the end of a chapter, they are indicated by a superscript and numbered consecutively using Arabic numerals. The first line of the note is indented. The required margins must be maintained when notes are used.

Tables and Figures

The word "Table" designates tabulated alphanumerical data used in the body of the thesis or dissertation and in the Appendices. The word "Figure" designates all other material, such as illustrations, charts, graphs, maps, photographs, drawings, and diagrams.

All Tables and Figures must be of reproducible quality. They should be inserted as near as possible to the portion of the text that they illustrate. Two or more small Tables or Figures may be grouped on a single page. Tables and/or Figures, including their captions, are placed on the page inside the prescribed margins. Text and Tables or Figures may be combined on the same page as long as the layout is professional and looks clear. When text is used on the same page with a Table and/or a Figure, the text should be separated from the Table or Figure by at least three single-spaced blank lines above and below. Tables and Figures are numbered in separate series. Each Table and Figure, including any in the Appendix, must be numbered consecutively in Arabic numerals in its own series. Format and placement of captions (centered or left-justified) should conform to the conventions of the student's discipline. The captions for Figures and Tables must be identical with those used in the List of Tables and the List of Figures in the preliminary pages.

A Table caption is placed at the top of the Table, whereas a Figure caption is placed below the Figure. Full-page Tables and Figures are numbered in the same format as the text. Graphs and line drawings must be of professional appearance.

Landscape-oriented Tables and Figures are permitted, but page numbers on landscape-oriented pages must be in the same location as the page numbers on portrait-oriented pages: the bottom center of the page.

Appendices

An appendix contains supplementary information (discussions too extensive for notes; translations; code) that would interrupt the main text of the thesis or dissertation. Appendices are counted and numbered in the pagination. All material in Appendices must fall within standard margins. If necessary, photo reduction may be used.

A single appendix may simply be titled "Appendix" with a subtitle, both centered. The heading of the Appendix should be 2 inches from the top edge of the page.

If the appended material consists of multiple sections, each separate Appendix should begin on a new page, and each Appendix should have its own name ("Appendix 1," "Appendix A," etc.). The heading of each new Appendix should be placed 2 inches from the top edge of the page.

In the case that a student has more than one Appendix, he or she may wish to have an Appendix Title Page. This consists of a single page, placed after the last page of the body, and preceding the first Appendix itself; the page should contain either the word "Appendix" or "Appendices," and this heading should be 2 inches from the top of the page.

References

For the References, the student should follow the practice of the discipline on inclusion or exclusion of works and on the form of the entry; the student should also consult his or her program coordinators for departmental policies.

The Reference section can be titled whatever the student wishes: "References," "Bibliography," "Works Cited," and so on. The heading ("References" or otherwise) should be placed 2 inches from the top edge of the page; it should be centered, without punctuation. The list of sources begins four spaces below the heading.

The sources themselves are usually arranged in alphabetical order by the last name of the author or the first major word of the title of anonymous publications, but some disciplines may suggest a different grouping of sources. The precise content of the entry should be determined by the discipline, but the intent is to provide all the information necessary for the reader to locate and consult the sources. Citations should be single-spaced with double spaces between entries.

Biography

The Biography is the final page of the document, a brief biographical sketch of the student, listing the education (institutions attended), degrees, honors, and accomplishments, the titles of publication, teaching or professional experiences, and any other relevant data. This section should be headed with the word "Biography" centered two inches below the top of the page. The text, single-spaced, begins four line below the heading (see Sample I). This page is numbered.

The Final Manuscript

Submission

Beginning in Spring 2013, Mason transitioned to mandatory Electronic Submission for all theses, dissertation, and projects.

Following acceptance of the thesis, dissertation, or project by the committee, the student should submit a PDF version of his/her document on a CD to UDTS.

The student should turn in a signed copy of the Signature Sheet, printed on any type of paper. The student may also wish to scan the signed Signature Sheet and either attach it to the PDF or save it on the CD he/she turns in.

The CD containing the PDF will be kept by UDTS. The PDF will be uploaded onto MARS (Mason Archival Repository Services) as the circulating copy.

There will not be a bound copy of the thesis / dissertation / project.

For more information about options for final submission please see <u>http://thesis.gmu.edu</u> or contact Sally Evans, the Coordinator of University Dissertation and Thesis Services at <u>udts@gmu.edu</u>.

Due Dates and Fees

Final copies of the thesis and dissertation, with all signatures, must be deposited with the University Dissertation and Thesis Coordinator in Fenwick Library on or before the date specified in the academic calendar. The deadline for Final Submission in each semester is as follows:

5:00 P.M. on the Friday before the last day of classes in each semester, as published in the Schedule of Classes.

This information will also be provided on the UDTS website, http://thesis.gmu.edu.

Any student who is preparing a dissertation or thesis must be in continuous registration for at least one credit of dissertation or thesis research (799 or 999) for every Fall and Spring semester from the time of initial registration of the dissertation or thesis or advancement to candidacy until graduation. Students who fail to maintain continuous registration must register for these credits and pay tuition retroactively before they will be allowed to graduate.

Binderies

Please note that the Library will not bind copies for a student or department. Students are advised to use a local bindery for additional bound copies or to order bound copies through ProQuest.

ProQuest (for dissertations only)

Information concerning ProQuest is available through University Dissertation & Thesis Services. All GMU dissertations must be submitted to ProQuest.

Any fees for this service (performed by ProQuest) are the responsibility of the student.

Please contact Sally Evans, the UDTS Coordinator, for more information about submission of dissertations to ProQuest.



This is an example of one of many different Signature Sheets. Students should check <u>http://thesis.gmu.edu/dtsignaturesheets.html</u> for the appropriate Signature Sheets for their College/School/Department.



SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT IN PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY



The bottom margin should be set at 1.25" **throughout** the entire document. [Sample B: Title Page]

The title should be 2 inches from the top of the page. It should be centered and should be in title caps. It should not be bold, underlined, or in all caps.

School-Based Management in Prince William County



The title page should not be paginated.

[Sample C: Copyright Page (optional)]

The Copyright Page is optional. You are encouraged to include it, but you do not have to do so.



Page numbers throughout the entire document are placed at the bottom center of each page, 1 inch from the bottom edge of the page.

[Dissertation, Thesis, or Project Guide: Page 13]

The style for all the main headings throughout the entire document should be the same. You can choose whatever size, font (Times New Roman, Arial, etc.), and style (bold, italic, underlined) you want for your main headings, but they must be the same throughout. The style we have used for the headings in this example are for illustrative purposes ONLY. You DO NOT have to make your main headings match the style we have used here. The Dedication Page is optional.

[Sample D: Dedication (optional)]

DEDICATION
{Space}
{Space}
{Space}

The heading should be 2 inches from the top of the page.

This is dedicated to my loving h shand Paul, my two wonderful children Anne and Lauren, and my dog Wolfie.

There should be three blank spaces in between the heading "DEDICATION" and the content of the dedication page.

Dedication Page text should be single-spaced.



I would like to the many friends, relatives, and supporters who have made this happen. My loving husband, Paul, assisted me in my research. My daughters helped me with word processing and notes. Drs. Spock, McCoy, and the other members of my committee were of invaluable help. Finally, thanks go out to the Fenwick Library for providing a clean, quiet, and well-equipped repository in which to work.

Acknowledgements text should be single-spaced.

The heading Table of Co starts 2 inch top of the pa	atents page es from the	The Table of Contents is required in all Theses and Dissertations The style of all main headings should be consistent throughout the entire document.
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		Page
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Contents	List of Abbreviations	
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AFTER the Table of	2. A Climate for School Reform	
Contents.	3. School-Based management (SBM) Defined	
	Clune and White Study	
	4. School-based Management in Prince William County	
-	4. School-based Wanagement in Finice withain County Overview	ONLY II YOU
	Leadership	nave rables
The Abstract	SBM Steering Committee	
page itself is not paginated but its	Building Staff Awareness	33 document,
corresponding	Building Community Awareness	and ONLY if
page number is	5. School Advisory Councils	
included in the	Historical Context	
Table of Contents.	Shaping School Councils	
Contents.	School Board Directives	
	Council Training	
	6. Featherstone Elementary School	nuve created
	Introduction	
	History and Implementation	
	Council Bylaws	
	Composition of Council	
	Long-Range Planning	
	Council Organization, Structures, and Protocol	
	Council Results	
	The Principal's Perspective	
	7. Conclusion	
	List of References	64

o not include a listing or your Curriculum itae in the Table of ontents.





teachers.

The body content of the Abstract Page is "Double Spaced".

No page of the Abstract should EVER be paginated, regardless of its length.





must adhere to the spacing requirements. (See notes to the

left.)



spaces in between the lines of the body content.

The Author's resume must not be included in the Curriculum Vitae