



Thesis Guidelines Manual

Missouri Western State University

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Introduction

The *Thesis Guidelines Manual* for Missouri Western State University has been written¹ to assist those students whose graduate degree programs require the writing of a master's thesis. The information herein pertains primarily to the technical aspects of thesis writing such as type of paper, format and style, and submission regulations. The purpose of this manual is to outline criteria and procedures which will result in a uniform appearance among the theses written at this university.

Scholarly Work

Some programs require students to complete a scholarly work component as part of their requirements for graduation. This requirement may be met through one of two options as prescribed for the student's approved program. The options are a graduate project or a thesis.

Graduate Project

A graduate project is a scholarly work demonstrating synthesis of knowledge obtained from the program. This can be in the form of a research project, research paper, scholarly writing, original artistic work/composition, or capstone project. The graduate project must be presented and defended before the student's graduate committee. The student's advisor and committee must approve the research project and file the Thesis/Final Project/Internship Completion and Approval Form with the Graduate Office at least 10 days prior to the end of classes in the semester of graduation.

Thesis

A thesis is an in-depth scholarly examination of a particular topic which makes a contribution to the student's academic field. A thesis is based on the examination of a hypothesis or research objective and includes the following components: an abstract, a review of literature, methods and procedures, data summary or findings from primary sources, and a discussion of the findings. The thesis requires approval of the supervising graduate research faculty member, the student's graduate committee and the graduate dean.

Successful completion of a thesis is the result of research, creative or scholarly activity that verifies the student's ability to conduct independent, critical investigation of an original topic in his or her discipline. The thesis displays a student's ability to write a well constructed and coherent presentation of his or her findings, a necessary skill for pursuing further education and/or success in the workplace. An oral defense of the thesis before the thesis committee is required. The committee's acceptance of the completed thesis must be filed in the Graduate School Office at least 10 days before the end of classes in the semester of graduation. This must be filed on a Thesis/Final Project/Internship Completion and Approval Form.

¹ *This document was modeled after Central Missouri University's thesis manual with written permission to meet the needs of Missouri Western State University.*

Graduate Student Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all graduate students to comply with all policies and procedures set forth in the *Graduate Bulletin*, this *Manual*, as well as policies set forth by their graduate department and all policies of Missouri Western State University. Requirements will not be waived nor will exceptions be granted because of claimed ignorance. It is the responsibility of each student to know the policies under which they are operating while enrolled as a graduate student.

Thesis Committee

The thesis committee evaluates a student's thesis to determine whether the thesis meets the standards of academic rigor and original research for his or her field. The committee also provides the student with support throughout the writing process by providing feedback regarding the direction of the thesis. It also evaluates the student's research proposal, attends a preliminary exam, provides annual progress reports, and participates in the final thesis defense.

Unless otherwise specified by the student's graduate department, the thesis advisor will assist in thesis committee selection. The committee shall consist of a minimum of three MWSU graduate faculty members with one being the chair. One of the committee members can be from another MWSU department. The student may add up to two additional committee members who are not MWSU faculty but have substantial knowledge of the thesis topic and are approved by the chair of the thesis committee.

In rare cases a single member of the committee can be from outside the MWSU faculty. This external member can be a faculty member from another accredited college or university, a retired MWSU faculty member, a professional from the field or a MWSU staff member. The external committee member may not be chair of a student's thesis committee. Appointment of an external committee member is subject to approval by the department chair, the college dean, and the dean of the graduate school. To begin the approval process, the student must submit a completed application for an external thesis committee member to his or her department.

Writing the Thesis

Students should be in frequent contact with his or her thesis advisor and committee. This communication provides committee members the opportunity to provide constructive criticism for the student and for the student to improve the thesis. Writing a thesis entails numerous drafts, therefore careful planning is needed for the thesis to be completed in a timely fashion. Committee members need time to read the thesis and provide feedback.

Students can request assistance from the library staff to locate relevant resources for the thesis. Services include the instruction on database use and interlibrary loans. For additional information visit the reference department in the library or call 271-5802.

Thesis Prospectus and Pre-Thesis Approvals

The department may require that the student submit and have approved a thesis prospectus before work begins on the thesis. The student should meet with the thesis advisor to determine the requirements of the department.

Research Involving Human Subjects

Federal law requires that ***all research involving human subjects, regardless of the source of funding, must be approved in advance by the Human Subjects Committee.*** The student must complete the appropriate human subjects forms and submit them to the Human Subjects Committee. Forms and instructions can be found on the Committee on the Use of Human Subjects (CUHSR) webpage (http://www.missouriwestern.edu/Orgs/human_subs/). Approval from the committee must be requested and obtained well in advance of the anticipated beginning date of the research. See http://www.missouriwestern.edu/Orgs/human_subs/policies/faq.php for meeting times.

Students must also complete the human subjects certification quiz before submitting a proposal to the CUHSR. Information for the quiz as well as the on-line quiz itself can be found at the following webpage under “Certification Process”:
http://www.missouriwestern.edu/Orgs/human_subs/

A copy of the signed approval memo must be submitted with the final thesis to the graduate school. Failure to follow the human subjects procedure will result in rejection of the thesis by the graduate school and confiscation of any data collected.

Research Involving Non-Human Animals

Federal law requires that ***all research involving selected mammals and birds ensure the human treatment of these animals. To ensure the humane treatment of these animals all research projects regardless of the source of funding, must be approved in advance by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee.*** Students must complete the appropriate animal subjects forms and submit them to the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Students may check with their thesis advisor on how to obtain these forms. Approval from the committee must be requested and obtained well in advance of the anticipated beginning date of the research.

The project must be approved by the Animal Care and Use Committee before any animal research or experimentation can begin. A copy of the signed approval memo must be submitted with the final thesis to the graduate school. Failure to follow all Animal Care and Use Committee procedures will result in rejection of the thesis by the graduate school and confiscation of any data collected.

Copyright Issues

Any copyrighted material in a thesis must be accompanied by a letter from the copyright holder granting permission to the thesis author to use copyrighted materials in the thesis. Permission must also be noted within the thesis with a “Used with the permission of name of copyright holder” disclaimer below the copyrighted item. It is the responsibility of the thesis author to secure copyright permissions from all copyright holders and include them with their submitted thesis.

If a researcher has devised a new test instrument as part of their project, clear notice of this must be made in the text. Under federal copyright law, a thesis is automatically copyrighted once it is published. The author is the copyright owner until copyright is formally transferred to another entity. Students need not register copyright of a work unless a public record of the copyright is desired. Copyright forms are available from the graduate school.

The thesis does not need to display the copyright symbol; however, if a copyright symbol is included the unnumbered copyright page must be added immediately following the thesis title page. The best way to protect an unpublished work is to place a copyright notice on every copy.

Finishing the Thesis

Thesis Defense

Prior to submitting a thesis to the department, a thesis defense must be scheduled. Students must successfully defend their thesis before the thesis committee in order to receive their degrees. The thesis committee will ask questions about the thesis. These questions may deal with any matters relating to the thesis. The committee then votes whether to accept or reject the thesis. The committee may recommend changes to the thesis in order to accept and approve a thesis. Committee members' signatures on the thesis approval form indicate that the thesis exhibits competent quality in writing, content, methods, and format. When a thesis is approved, each thesis committee member signs the thesis approval form and the thesis is submitted to the graduate school for further review.

Approval by the Graduate School

Once a thesis is approved by the thesis committee and department chair, students must submit a complete signed copy of their theses and all necessary forms to the graduate school for final approval. In order to allow sufficient time for review of a thesis, the manuscript **must** be submitted to the graduate school at least **ten days** prior to the last day of classes. However, the earlier a thesis is submitted to the graduate school the better, as theses may require corrections. The graduate school will check that the manuscript follows this manual.

If corrections need to be made, the thesis will be returned to the student with the required changes noted. It is the student's responsibility to make the corrections and return the corrected thesis to the graduate school by the deadline set by the graduate school. The graduate school will ensure that all changes have been made and then the thesis will be approved and signed by the dean of the graduate school.

Copying and Binding

After the thesis has been signed and approved by the dean of the graduate school, students must arrange to submit at least three copies of their theses. Copies must be on high quality paper, at least 20 lb. bond, and be printed on a laser printer. All copies must be legible. Each copy should be submitted in a separate manilla envelope labeled with the student's name and "G" number. Students desiring to have copies bound for their own use must submit additional copies. The thesis will be bound by the library binding vendor. After binding, one copy will be available for check-out from the library, one will be placed in library special collections/university archives, and one digital (e.g., doc or pdf) copy will be kept by the college.

For students completing a project that will not be bound in the library, their respective graduate degree areas will arrange for a permanent department file of the results of its research component. The name of the student, the title of the research, the graduate degree, date earned, and degree area are to be sent to the graduate office for filing in the student's permanent file.

Thesis Formatting

Proper Style Manual

Guidelines provided in this thesis manual supersede other style manual guidelines. For additional formatting issues not mentioned in this manual, students should follow the guidelines found in the department's required style manual. Each department dictates which style manual (e.g., APA, MLA, Turabian) is appropriate for the thesis. It is the student's responsibility to find out which style guide manual is required by the department. Manuscripts submitted using the wrong format or old formats will not be accepted.

Consistency of Formatting

Consistent formatting must be used throughout the thesis. For example, chapter titles in the Table of Contents must appear exactly the same as chapter titles in the text. Similarly, subheadings must be used in the same way throughout the thesis. If a chapter is divided into four sections and the heading for the first section is centered in uppercase and lowercase letters, the remaining three sections must be centered in uppercase and lowercase letters as well. The same formatting conventions must be followed for all chapters.

Print and Paper

The thesis must be printed in black ink on a laser printer or a printer capable of producing comparable quality. A 12-point font size must be used for all text. Recommended fonts include Helvetica, Swiss Roman, Universe, CG Times, Dutch Roman, Arial, and Times New Roman. Use only one side of the paper. Pages should be numbered.

The quality of paper used should be 20 lb. bond paper or better. This includes both the original manuscript and the official university copies. Because of the danger of smearing while handling the manuscript, do not use textured or erasable paper.

Margins, Spacing, and Justification

The margins, including page numbers, must be 1 inch at the top, bottom, and right side of the page, and 1.5 inches on the left side. The extra half inch on the left allows for binding and the hardcover. Margins are the same throughout the entire document. The body of the thesis must be double-spaced and left-justified.

Widows and Orphans

A widow is a single line of text from the beginning of a paragraph at the bottom of a page. An orphan is a single line of text from the end of a paragraph at the top of a page. The thesis should not contain any widows or orphans. Most major word processing programs have an option to eliminate widows and orphans automatically.

Acknowledgments

An acknowledgments page may be included in the thesis. Place this page immediately before the table of contents. Acknowledgment must be made of any grants which supported the research.

Abstract

The thesis abstract is a concise, informative, well written summary of the contents of the thesis. The abstract should define the problem, describe the research method or design, and report the results and conclusions. The abstract is strictly limited to a MAXIMUM of 350 words. The abstract should not include tables, figures, plates, subheadings, or references.

Bibliography/References/Works Cited

The thesis must contain documentation for all sources cited or mentioned in the text. This documentation takes the form of the bibliography, references, or works cited. Discipline-specific style manuals should be used for the formatting of this section. Each source that is mentioned in the text of the thesis must be documented in the bibliography/references/works cited section.

Tables, Figures, and Plates

Tables should not include any artwork or graphics. Figures are illustrations including artwork or graphics, such as graphs, charts, maps, or drawings. Plates are photographs.

Each one of these items should be placed in the manuscript immediately after the table, figure, or plate is first mentioned in the text. Each plate should be on a separate page. A table or figure may be included on a page with text if it can remain in one piece; otherwise, the table or figure should be placed on a separate page. Tables, figures, and plates should each be numbered in order of their placement in the manuscript (e.g., Table 1, Table 2; Figure 1, Figure 2; Plate 1, Plate 2).

Tables should be formatted with clear labels for the rows and columns and in accordance with the appropriate style guide. Figures should communicate information quickly and clearly. Directly below the table, figure, or plate should be the citation for the data contained therein.

Some tables, figures, and plates are better suited to landscape page orientation than portrait orientation. When this is the case the “top” of the page becomes the right side and the “bottom” becomes the left side of the page. In addition, although the orientation of the page has changed, the page number should appear in the same position as all the other page numbers in the body of the thesis. See the sample thesis for an example.

Appendices

One or more appendices may be included for material which is relevant to the thesis, but which would detract from the flow of the manuscript. Examples include large data sets, computer programs, surveys, and stimulus materials. If only one appendix is included, it should be headed with the word APPENDIX in capital letters, centered at the top of the page. When multiple appendices are included, they should be labeled in alphabetical order according to when they are mentioned in the text (e.g., APPENDIX A, APPENDIX B). Each appendix must be mentioned at least once in the text of the manuscript. Page numbering for appendices is the same as it is for chapters in the main body of the manuscript. When an appendix requires more than one page, the heading for the appendix should be on the first page only.

Format Requirements

List of Tables, Figures & Plates

- Start heading one inch from top of page.
- Page numbers should be lowercase Roman numeral, centered and one inch from the bottom of the page.
- Descriptions should be as brief as possible. A length of no more than two lines for each table description is recommended. Descriptions of more than one line should be single-spaced.

Formatting Chapters

- The page number may be either at the top right of the page or centered at the bottom; in either case it must be one inch from the edge of the page. Be consistent about where the page number is placed.
- If page numbers are at the top of the page, leave two blank lines between the page number and the title.
- If page numbers are at the bottom of the page, start the title one inch from the top of the page.
- The title of the chapter must match the title listed in the Table of Contents.
- Center the title within the margins
- The chapter title should be in all caps.
- The text should begin on the third line below the title.
- Double-space and left-justify the text.
- The first page of Chapter 1 is page 1; number pages continuously after that.
- Each chapter must start on a new page.
- Consult the style manual for the student's discipline on whether a short title should be included next to the page number.
- After the first page of each chapter, simply continue the chapter text on following pages.
- The chapter title should be on the first page of the chapter only.
- Double-space and left-justify the text.

Reference/Bibliography/Works Cited Section

- Continue the page numbering from the end of the last chapter.
- The heading should be centered within the margins. It should be one inch below the top of the page (if page numbers are at the bottom) or two lines below the page number (if page numbers are at the top).
- Use consistent punctuation throughout the reference section.

Appendix/Appendices

- Continue page numbering from the Bibliography/References/Works Cited.
- The heading should be centered within the margins. It should be one inch below the top of the page (if page numbers are at the bottom) or two lines below the page number (if page numbers are at the top).
- If there is only one appendix, the heading should be APPENDIX. If there are multiple appendices, they should be labeled in alphabetical order according to when they are mentioned in the text. Thus, the first appendix mentioned in the text would be APPENDIX A.
- Each appendix must have a descriptive title, centered under the heading.

Order of Pages

The table below indicates the correct order of pages and page numbering. Some pages are required for any MWSU thesis; other pages are optional.

Page or Section	Required	Numbering style
Thesis approval page	Yes	Roman numeral i not printed on page
Thesis title page	Yes	Roman numeral ii not printed on page
Acknowledgments	No	Roman numeral iii not printed on page
Table of contents	Yes	Roman numeral, bottom center
List of tables	Yes, if thesis includes tables	Roman numeral, bottom center
List of figures	Yes, if thesis includes figures	Roman numeral, bottom center
List of plates	Yes, if thesis includes plates	Roman numeral, bottom center
Thesis abstract	Yes	Roman numeral, bottom center
Main body (chapters)	Yes	Start with page 1, bottom center or top right of page
Bibliography/references/works cited	Yes	Continue from chapters
Appendix/appendices	No	Continue

Important Deadlines

At least one full semester prior to graduation

- File Thesis Committee Approval Form

Before you start collecting data

- Ensure you have IRB and/or Animal Care Committee approval
- Ensure you have any necessary copyright or other permission

At least 8 weeks before graduation

- Provide copies of your thesis to your thesis committee and begin your thesis defense process

At least 20 days before the end of the semester in which you graduate

- Request a waiver of thesis format requirements if needed

At least 10 days before the end of the semester in which you graduate

- A completed and approved thesis must be sent to the graduate school along with the thesis approval form. This should include three copies of your thesis, and an electronic version emailed to graduate@missouriwestern.edu

Checklist

1. For theses including research with human participants or non-human subjects ensure Approval was obtained from the appropriate committee (CUHSR, IACUC) before collecting data. The signed approval memo should be attached to the thesis.
2. Grammar, spelling, and punctuation are correct
3. Copyright permission is attached for any copyrighted material included in the thesis
4. Required preliminary pages are included and formatted correctly
5. Thesis is formatted with the correct style for the discipline (e.g., APA, MLA)
6. Thesis adheres to all guidelines in this Thesis Guidelines Manual (unless a waiver has been granted in advance using the appropriate form)
7. All works cited in the text have entries in the References, Bibliography, or Works Cited section
8. Table of contents chapter titles, headings, and subheadings match those in the thesis body
9. It is printed in black ink, Times font, with a font size of 12 points.
10. Margins are 1.5 inches on the left and 1 inch on the top, bottom, and right of each page.
11. Thesis is printed on 20 lb. or heavier bond paper stock
12. For theses including tables, figures, or plates:
 1. Appropriate lists of tables/figures/plates are included as preliminary pages, with page numbers
 2. Titles of tables/figures/plates match the titles in the list.

Send three printed copies in folders or an envelope (not stapled) to the Graduate School office along with the signed thesis approval form, and an electronic copy (Microsoft Word or PDF) to graduate@missouriwestern.edu. **DEADLINE IS TEN DAYS BEFORE THE LAST DAY OF CLASSES.**

Format Examples

1. Title Page
2. Table of Contents

(TITLE OF THESIS)

by

(STUDENT'S FULL NAME)

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF (OFFICAL TITLE)

Major: (OFFICAL TITLE)

Missouri Western State University

St. Joseph, Missouri

(YEAR)

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Thesis Forms

Note that .PDF versions of these forms are all available on the graduate school wiki

1. Application for an External Thesis Committee Member
2. Thesis Committee Approval Form
3. Thesis / Final Project / Internship Completion and Approval Form
4. Thesis Bound Copy Request Form
5. Thesis Format Waiver Request



**Application for an External Thesis
Committee Member**

Student Name: _____

G-Number: _____

Program: _____

Name of non MWSU Graduate Faculty Committee Member

Affiliation

Please attach the following:

1. A paragraph explaining the justification for the external committee member.
2. The external committee member's curriculum vitae (CV).

Student Signature

Date

Department Chair Signature

Date

College Dean Signature

Date

Dean of the Graduate School Signature

Date



Thesis Committee Approval Form

Please submit this form after the student has been accepted as a degree-seeking student and enrolls in graduate-level courses, and no later than one full semester before the proposed thesis completion date.

Student Name: _____

G-Number: _____

Program: _____

____ Initial Assignment/Approval

____ Change in Committee or Topic

Proposed Thesis Topic:

Thesis Committee:

Committee Chair (Print Name)

Signature

Committee Member

Signature

Committee Member

Signature

Additional Committee Member (optional)

Signature

Additional Committee Member (optional)

Signature

If any committee members are not MWSU Graduate Faculty, attach a completed application for an external thesis committee member.

Route to the Graduate School after all signatures are obtained.

rev: 11/2010



**Thesis / Final Project / Internship
Completion and Approval Form**

Student Name: _____

G-Number: _____

Program: _____

_____ This student has successfully completed and defended a thesis or final project entitled:

_____ This student has successfully completed an internship instead of a thesis. Please place the following information on the transcript (optional): _____

_____ This student has not successfully completed/defended a thesis, final project, or internship as required by the program. Please remove this student from the graduation list for the _____ semester.

Advisor/Thesis Advisor Date

Thesis Committee Member (if required) Thesis Committee Member (if required)

NOTE: This form must be completed, signed, and forwarded to the graduate school (WITH THREE COPIES OF THE THESIS OR FINAL PROJECT) no later than 10 class days before the end of the semester the student wishes to graduate. The student must also email a copy of the thesis or final project to graduate@missouriwestern.edu. The thesis must comply with the standards of the graduate school as well as any program requirements.

Graduate Dean Date

rev: 11/2010



**Thesis Bound Copy
Request Form**

I would like a bound copy of my thesis sent to me. I understand that there is a \$20 charge for this.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

E-Mail: _____

Phone: _____

Please attach an *additional* printed copy of your thesis, along with a receipt from the business office showing a payment of \$20 to the Graduate School Operating Budget (GRADOP) and return to the graduate school office.



**Thesis Format
Waiver Request**

Student Name: _____

G-Number: _____

Program: _____

I am requesting a waiver of the following format requirements for my thesis or scholarly work:

I am requesting this waiver because:

Student

Thesis Advisor

Date

Graduate Dean

Date

___ Approved

___ Not Approved

This approval must be granted at least 20 days before the end of the semester in which the student is scheduled to graduate.