

Graduate Thesis Manual

Instructions for the Preparation of Graduate Thesis



Office of Graduate Studies Texas A&M
University-San Antonio

A. INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this manual is to provide uniform standards regarding style and format, but also to allow enough flexibility to satisfy the accepted practices of each academic discipline. This manual serves as a guide to the University policies and procedures on the preparation of theses.

Developing and writing a thesis is a significant task. No manual is likely to hold all the answers to questions that may arise. Faculty and students should feel free to contact the Office of Graduate Studies at graduatestudies@tamusa.edu about issues not addressed in the manual.

B. RESEARCH COMPLIANCE

Research activities involving the use of live animals, biohazards, or human subjects must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate Texas A&M University – San Antonio regulatory research committee (i.e., IRB, IACUC, IBC) **before** the activity can commence. This requirement applies to activities conducted at A&M-SA and to activities conducted at non-A&M-SA facilities or institutions. In both cases, students are responsible for working with the relevant A&M-SA research compliance program to ensure and document that all A&M-SA compliance obligations are met before the study begins. Students are encouraged to reach out to the appropriate compliance office early.

For research involving the use of human subjects, please contact IRB@tamusa.edu
For research involving the use of biohazards, please contact IBC@tamusa.edu
For research involving the use of animals, please contact IACUC@tamusa.edu

C. SETTING UP A COMMITTEE

All research being performed for the completion of a thesis must have a committee. The Committee Approval Form - Thesis must be completed and submitted via Digital Commons. This form should be submitted by the student once they have successfully completed their thesis proposal. Instructions for submitting this form and all other thesis documents can be found at the end of this document.

If there are any changes to the Thesis Committee at any time during the thesis process, students must submit a Change in Committee Form - Thesis via Digital Commons.

D. PROPOSAL PREPARATION

Theses require proposals. The thesis proposal should describe the research that the student intends to undertake. The proposal should explain the nature of the problem to be examined, the status of current research relating to the subject under consideration, the research method, and the importance of the projected work. The proposal should also contain a reference section, using an appropriate citation style for the student's designated major. The proposal should be submitted to the students' Graduate Thesis Chair and Graduate Thesis Committee for approval.

The student must receive approval from their Graduate Thesis Committee and submit the Committee Approval Form – Thesis via Digital Commons before beginning the thesis.

E. COPYRIGHT PROTECTION OF SOURCE MATERIALS

Since a thesis is legally classified as a publication, care must be taken not to violate United States copyright laws. Inclusion of illustrative graphs, tables, charts, etc., from copyrighted sources is permitted only if a letter of release from the original copyright holder is included in a separate appendix of the thesis, and properly cited. In special cases where acknowledgement of source is sufficient, it should be clearly noted.

F. MANUSCRIPT PREPARATION

| Citation and Writing Style |
|---|
| The style of theses vary widely according to academic discipline, yet there are standards common to all scholarship. The style of the thesis should be the decision of the student's graduate thesis chair, with the concurrence of the student's thesis committee and in line with any guidelines of his or her department. <i>APA may be used as a base formatting.</i> |
| Corrections |
| The final draft of the thesis must <u>not</u> contain any visible corrections (e.g., crossing out of letters or words, Track Changes, etc.). |

G. FORMATTING

| Typeface Specifications |
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| Theses should be written in a conventional font, approved by the committee chair (e.g., Arial, Verdana, Times New Roman). The type size must be 12 point. |
| Line Spacing |
| Line-spacing of the narrative text should be double spaced. Single spacing is used only for such specific and appropriate purposes as long, blocked, and inset quotations, footnotes, endnotes, and itemized or tabular materials. |
| Margins |
| All typing must be 1 inch on the left, 1 inch on the right, and a minimum of 1 inch on the top and bottom of each page, except for the page number, which is placed 3/4 inch from bottom of the page and centered. |
| All illustrations and tables in the thesis must conform to the margin requirements in every way. |

H. REQUIRED ELEMENTS OF THE THESIS

| Title Page |
|--|
| The title is typed in capital letters, double spaced (if the title is more than one line in length), and centered within margins. |
| There is no page number on the Title page (although it is considered to be page i). |
| The full legal name of the student typed in capital letters, without initials and without designation of profession, military rank, or marriage is listed. The name on the thesis must be the same as that recorded in the official records of the Registrar of Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Any changes must be cleared by both the Registrar and the Office of Graduate Studies, as well as the student's Thesis Committee. |
| The appropriate month and year when the degree will be awarded must be shown at the bottom of the Title page. |

Abstract

The Abstract, which is placed immediately after the Title page, is the first numbered page, ii, centered at the bottom of the page. The text of the Abstract must not exceed 150 words.

Numbering of pages starts with the Abstract page (ii), centered at the bottom of the page. The word ABSTRACT is centered at the top of the page within the margins and is typed in capital letters.

The title of the graduate thesis is typed three spaces below the word ABSTRACT in upper and lower case letters and double-spaced (if more than one line in length). The title on the Abstract must be exactly the same as the title on the Title page.

The date of graduation (same date as shown on the Title page) must be shown on the Abstract page. It is placed in parentheses (double spaced) below the title.

The student's full legal name, as listed on the Title page and the student's previous degrees are listed one double line space beneath the date of graduation.

The name of the Chairperson, or the names of the Co-Chair of the student's Advisory Committee, are listed one double space beneath the last line designating the student's previous degree(s).

The text of the Abstract starts one triple line space beneath the heading with a paragraph indentation. The Abstract text is typed double line spaced and is consistent with the spacing style followed in the narrative text.

Dedication (Optional)

Font paragraph will be italicized, and indented to the left.

Acknowledgements (Optional)

Font paragraph will be italicized, and indented to the left.

Table of Contents

The Table of Contents indicates the major divisions (i.e., chapters or sections) and principle subheadings of the thesis.

Preliminary pages do not have to be listed in the Table of Contents; however, if they are listed, the listings must start with the Abstract (ii) and must include all preliminary pages.

Inclusion of the Table of Contents page, in the Table of Contents itself is optional.

All major divisions of the narrative text (i.e., chapters or sections) and principle subheadings (when appropriate) within each chapter or section must be listed in the Table of Contents. The subordination of the subheadings should be indicated by appropriate spacing and indentation.

All supplementary pages such as the reference section, appendices (if any), and Vita must be listed in the Table of Contents.

The numbering, wording, and pagination of titles and headings must be exactly the same in the Table of Contents as they are on the pages of the graduate thesis. All page numbers of the Table of Contents are right-hand justified.

List of Tables/Figures (As Appropriate)

| List of Symbols/Abbreviations (As Appropriate) |
|---|
| Body of Thesis |
| <p>The body of a thesis or dissertation starts with chapter 1 (or introduction) and continues all the way through the last appendix. The first page of chapter 1 (or the introduction) is counted as page number 1 and is denoted in the Table of Contents with an Arabic number.</p> <p>The first page, and every first page of each new section (chapter 2, chapter 3, references, appendices, etc), does NOT receive a page number in its footer. Again, the first pages of each section are only given a page number in the Table of Contents, though they are always counted</p> |
| References |
| <p>References should be consistent in following the chosen citation style.</p> <p>Background materials listed should follow the chosen citation style. Some departments encourage the use of an Appendix for such items as raw data, problems encountered, and other information. Appendices may be added to the end of a graduate thesis; format and style are left up to the Program Chair or Graduate Thesis Chair.</p> |
| Appendices (As Appropriate) |
| <p>An appendix is required if any pre-research approvals are needed for the student's work: IRB, IBC or IACUC approval letters that include the student's last name are required if any human subjects or animals are used in the research and should be Appendix A.</p> <p>If the work only has one appendix, then simply title it "Appendix"; if the work has more than one appendix, then title them in sequential order using capital letters ("Appendix A", "Appendix B", etc).</p> <p>The title of the appendix should also accompany the word "Appendix".</p> <p>The first page of each appendix should not have a page number in its footer; it is, however, denoted in the Table of Contents.</p> <p>Appendices should have an order as follows: pre-research approval(s), permission letters, then as they are referenced in the work.</p> |
| VITA |
| <p>A brief biographical sketch of the student is required as a part of each manuscript. This biographical sketch is called a vita, and it may exceed one page in length.</p> <p>The title, VITA, is typed in capital letters and centered at the top of the first page.</p> <p>The vita is the last numbered section in the graduate thesis and must be included in the Table of Contents. It is numbered at the top right edge.</p> <p>The biographical sketch should include the <u>student's full legal name</u> (as it appears on the title page and elsewhere), contact information (mailing address, email address, and phone number), and educational background (including schools attended, degrees, where completed, and major field of specialization, conference presentations, publications).</p> <p>Where applicable, the vita should list professional experience in industry, military service, business, and academic life, as well as any publications or conference presentations.</p> |

I. GENERAL CHECKLIST FOR FINAL DOCUMENTS

- a. General neatness and readability.
- b. Consistency of style and format throughout the document.
- c. Title page, Abstract page, Dedication page, Acknowledgement page, and Vita page, including:
 - i. Style, spacing, and format.
 - ii. The month and year of graduation. Full legal name of the student, without initials and without designation of profession, military rank, or marriage. The name on the thesis should be the same as that recorded in the official records of Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Any exceptions must be cleared by both the Registrar and the Director of the Office of Graduate Studies, as well as the Student's Graduate Thesis Chair.
 - iii. Double-spacing of titles over one line in length.
- d. Exact correspondence of titles and page numbers of items in the Table of Contents, List of Tables, and List of Figures with the same titles and page numbers in the text.
- e. Format and spacing of appropriate sections within the manuscript, including:
 - i. Major divisions: Each major division (e.g., Abstract, Dedication, Acknowledgments, Table of Contents, List of Figures, Symbols, References, Vita, etc.) is typed in capital letters and centered at the top of a new page. Each chapter or section heading or title is also a major division which is typed in capital letters and centered at the top of a new page. Page number appears at the bottom center of the page.
 - ii. Subheadings: There must be consistent subordination of subheadings within each chapter or section. Subheadings are the further division within each chapter or section and do not start on new pages and are not typed in all capital letters. The standard placement of subheadings is either flush left or centered.
 - iii. Table of Contents: Major division and principal (or first-order) subheadings must be listed on the Table of Contents page. The page number for the Table of Contents is centered at the bottom of the page.
- f. Appropriate format and placement of figures and tables within the manuscript.
- g. Consecutive numbering of tables and figures throughout the manuscript.
- h. Consistent citation style.
 - i. Compliance with margin requirements.
- j. Numbering of every page in the manuscript starting with Abstract page (ii) and ending with the Vita page.
- k. Proofread for correct grammar and spelling.

J. ANNOUNCING THESIS DEFENSE

It is the policy of Texas A&M University – San Antonio to announce all thesis defenses. Thesis defenses are open to the campus at large as well as the general public. Defense announcement should be publicized a minimum of two weeks prior to the defense date.

Students, in conjunction with their thesis chairperson, should submit the *Defense Notification Form - Thesis* to the Office of Graduate Studies a minimum of two weeks prior to the defense date. This form will be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies via Digital Commons. Upon receiving the form, The Office of Graduate Studies will send notification to the university community.

K. SUBMISSION OF THESIS PACKAGES

The final graduate thesis is submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies via Digital Commons on or before the published deadline. All deadlines are published on the Office of Graduate Studies Website. Students should visit the link below or view the instructions at the end of this document for specific instructions on submitting their materials.

https://digitalcommons.tamusa.edu/masters_theses/

a. University Review of Thesis

All theses must be reviewed by the Office of Graduate Studies. This review is to ensure all theses meet university guidelines regarding formatting, structure and composition of the thesis (i.e., the guidelines discussed previously in this document). Students should only submit their thesis for university review after they have successfully defended their thesis. Students must submit the *Defense Approval Form – Thesis* along with their completed thesis. This form is also submitted via Digital Commons.

The deadline for submission of completed theses for university review is generally three weeks prior to the last day of scheduled classes. Specific dates vary by semester and are posted on the Office of Graduate Studies Website.

b. Final Submission of Thesis

The final deadline for submitting completed theses is generally the last day of scheduled classes for a given semester. Specific dates vary by semester and are listed on the Office of Graduate Studies website.

All theses/dissertations must be submitted on or before the final deadline. The completed final draft must include all edits required by the student's thesis committee and identified by the Office of Graduate Studies during the university review process. Any corrections not addressed by the student will result in the thesis being sent back to the student.

Completed final drafts must be submitted on or before the posted deadline. This is a firm deadline.

The thesis package becomes the property of the University and is archived in Digital Commons and the University library.

THE TITLE OF YOUR THESIS GOES HERE IN ALL CAPITAL LETTERS

A Thesis by:
Your name here

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies
Texas A&M University-San Antonio
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Semester of Commencement here (December 2023)

Major Subject: English Literature

ABSTRACT

The Title of Your Thesis Here in Upper and Lower Case

(Month and Year of Commencement Ceremony)

Student's Full Name, as listed on Title Page

Graduate Thesis Chair: Name Here

The text of the abstract starts on this line with a paragraph indentation. The body is typed double space. Abstract must not exceed 150 words. This is the first page to have a lower-case Roman numeral (ii) centered at the bottom of the page.

This document will take you through the steps for submitting all documents needed for your thesis. Before beginning your thesis you are encouraged to visit the Digital Commons website to become familiar.

**Step 1
Upon Completion of Your Thesis Proposal
(Submitting Graduate Thesis Composition Approval Form)**

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| 1 | You can use the direct link Masters Theses Texas A&M University-San Antonio (tamusa.edu) If you haven't created an account yet, this link will prompt you to create and account first. | |
| 2 | At the bottom of the column on the left side of the page, choose "Submit Research" | This takes you to the page where you will submit all your thesis documents (e.g., Committee Approval Form, Committee Change Form, Defense Notification Form, Defense Approval Form) for University review. |
| 3 | Fill in the appropriate information. You are able to edit this information as needed until your work is published. At the bottom of the page you will see "additional files". Please check the box allowing you to "add additional files". <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please upload your "Graduate Thesis Composition Approval Form" as an additional file. | Uploading this form notifies the Office of Graduate Studies that you have successfully completed your proposal defense and you have a thesis committee. Once you submit this form you will receive an email from the Office of Graduate Studies notifying you it was received and you are able to proceed with your thesis. |

**Step 2
Complete Your Thesis**

**Step 3
Setting a Date For Your Thesis Defense
(Submitting Thesis Defense Notification Form)**

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| 1 | When you have set a date for your thesis defense please send appropriate notification to the Office of Graduate Studies. The Office will then send out notification to the university community. Please use the steps below (similar to the steps used in step 1) to upload the Thesis Defense Notification Form. | |
| 2 | Return to the Master's Thesis page, login, click on the title of your submission. You should see the option to upload additional files. Masters Theses Texas A&M University-San Antonio (tamusa.edu) | Uploading this form notifies the Office of Graduate Studies that you have set a date for your thesis defense. You will receive an email from the Office of Graduate Studies when you have submitted this form. The Office will also send notification to the University |

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| | | community announcing your thesis defense. |
| Step 4 | | |
| Submitting Your Completed Thesis for Graduate Studies Approval | | |
| 1 | <p>Return to the Master's Thesis page, login, click on the title of your submission. This will open into a new page. Then, click on the Revise Submission link in the left hand sidebar, make the revisions.</p> <p>The direct link: Masters Theses Texas A&M University-San Antonio (tamusa.edu)</p> | |
| 2 | <p>Fill in the appropriate information. You are able to adjust/edit any information that you had previously submitted. At the bottom of the page you will see “Additional Files”. Please check the box allowing you to “add additional Files”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please upload your <i>Defense Approval Form - Thesis</i> as an additional file. <p>At the bottom of the page you will also be asked to upload your Thesis.</p> <p>Click Submit</p> | <p>Checking the box for adding additional files will allow you to upload your <i>Defense Approval Form -Thesis</i>. This will be stored, along with your Thesis but will not be visible to the general public.</p> |
| 3 | <p>By clicking submit you are sending your thesis to the Office of Graduate Studies for University review. The office will review your thesis for formatting, style, and typos.</p> | <p>Please be sure to submit your thesis for University review by the posted dates. Doing so will allow for careful review of your manuscript and time for you to make any required edits prior to the final deadline.</p> |
| 4 | <p>Upon completion of the review you will receive an email from Digital Commons with a decision. This decision will either be (1) Accept thesis with Minor Revisions or (2) Accept Thesis.</p> <p>This process will continue until the thesis meets all University guidelines and is accepted for publication on Digital Commons.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Accept Thesis with Minor Revisions</u></p> <p>This response means that the reviewer(s) found formatting, style, or other editing issues that must be addressed prior to your thesis being accepted. The email will include a summary of the issues to be addressed. The author is then able to revisit the manuscript, make the edits and resubmit the thesis for further review.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Accept Thesis</u></p> <p>This response means that your thesis meets all requirements and the reviewers are not requesting any additional edits. If you receive this response there are no other actions you</p> |

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| | | need to take. Your thesis will be published on Digital Commons. |
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