**INTRODUCTION**

As a candidate for a master’s degree, your department may require a thesis representing original research that contributes to your discipline. You must provide two copies of your thesis to be made available in the Drake Memorial Library, one archival copy that will not leave the library and one circulating copy that can be checked out by the campus community or the public at large. In addition, your department may require one or more copies of your thesis to keep on file. Therefore, it is essential that you conform to the guidelines established in this document and construct a well-presented thesis.

This document will help you organize your thesis and format it appropriately. In addition, you should seek the guidance of your advisor and the other members of your thesis committee throughout the entire process of writing your thesis. It is the responsibility of each candidate for a master’s degree to follow the guidelines established in this document. Choice of citation and bibliographical style will vary by discipline, but the format of every thesis should be consistent with these guidelines.

**PARTS OF THE THESIS**

**Title Page**

The title page of the thesis must include your full legal name, your department’s official name, the title of your work, a thesis submission statement, and the name of the degree you are seeking. Be sure to double-space all portions of your title page. Refer to **Figure 1** as an example.
Figure 1 Sample Title Page

Full Title of Thesis
(centered in top quarter of page)

by

Full name of author

A thesis submitted to the Department of *** of the State University of New York College at Brockport in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of ***
Month, day, and year submitted

Copyright Page

If you would like to copyright your thesis, the copyright page follows the title page. Include a statement of copyright, your full name, and the year centered above the bottom margin of the page and double-spaced. Refer to Figure 2 as an example.

Signature Page

Your thesis must include a signature page with the original signatures of your committee members. That is, do not include a photocopy of the signature page with your thesis. Print out multiple blank copies of the signature page and have each copy signed so that each official copy of your thesis, the two kept in the library and the one or more kept by your department, include original signatures. Signature pages should be on the same cotton bond paper as the remainder of your thesis, should be double-spaced, and should follow the prescribed margins (see Page 5). Your advisor should sign the top line. Include the title of your thesis and your full name on the signature page. Refer to Figure 3 as an example.
Figure 3 Sample Signature Page

Full title of thesis
by Author’s full name
(centered and double-spaced)

APPROVED BY: *

Advisor

Date

Reader

Date

Reader

Date

Chair, Graduate Committee

Date

*DVaries by department

Dedication

A dedication page is optional. If you choose to include one, it must be on its own page.

Acknowledgements

An acknowledgements page is optional. If you choose to include one, it must be on its own page.

Table of Contents

A table of contents is required. Place the table of contents immediately before the text of the thesis and any lists of illustrations, charts, etc. that you include (see below). Include all chapter names and main subdivision names in the table of contents. Chapter titles are left-justified and page numbers are right-justified with a dot leader preceding them. Subdivision names should be indented. Make sure to be consistent in the numbering format for chapter and section titles used in the table of contents and that used in the text. For example, do not use Roman numerals for chapter titles in the table of contents and Arabic numerals in the text and do not write out numbers as words in the table of contents, but use an Arabic or Roman numeral in the text. Refer to Figure 4 as an example.

Figure 4 Sample Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter One: Title</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Two: Title</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subheading Title</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lists of Illustrations

If you are including illustrations, you must include a list of them. Illustrations include pictures, photographs, tables, figures, charts, and graphs. Use a separate list for each type of illustration and format the list exactly as you would format the table of contents. Additionally, each list must be on a separate page.
Abstract

An abstract of your thesis is required. Your abstract should be brief (no more than one page) and double-spaced on its own separate page.

Text

The text of your thesis represents the body of your research. Be sure to cite quotations and ideas borrowed from others in a style that is appropriate to your discipline. Consult with your thesis advisor on the appropriate style for your thesis and be consistent in using that style throughout your work. Below is a list of standard style guides.


Footnotes/Endnotes

Place footnotes at the bottom of the page and endnotes at the end of the chapter or at the end of the text before the bibliography. Consult the style guide you are using for appropriate use of notes.

Appendices

Use an appendix or appendices to include materials that are not an integral part of the text, but that contribute examples or supporting evidence to your research. Include the appendix/appendices after the last page of the text and before the bibliography.

Bibliography/List of References/Works Cited

The bibliography, or list of references, is the last required portion of the thesis. Be sure to use the citation style that is approved by your thesis advisor.

Vita

You may include a brief vita with your thesis. A vita tells the reader basic facts about your birth and your educational experience. If you choose to include a vita, it must be the last page of your thesis and be numbered. It must be written in the third person. That is, avoid the use of the pronoun “I”. Refer to Figure 5 for an example of a vita.

Figure 5 Sample Vita

The author (your full name) was born in (city and state) on (date of birth, including the year). He/She attended (the name of your college/university) from 19xx to 19xx and received a Bachelor of Arts/Science in (your major/majors) in 19xx. He/She began work toward a Master of Arts/Fine Arts/Science in (subject of your graduate studies) at the State University of New York College at Brockport in the Fall/Spring/Summer of 19xx.

PHYSICAL FORMAT

Prepare your manuscript using a word processing program.

Paper

Use only one side of high-quality 25 percent or 100 percent cotton bond paper. Check the watermark on the paper to ensure that it is 25 percent or 100 percent cotton bond. Paper must be white and unlined and must be the standard 8-1/2” by 11” size.
Type Size, Font, and Print

Use a 10 or 12-point standard font such as Times New Roman, Helvetica, Geneva, Courier, or Palatino. Avoid using fancy fonts as they are difficult to read and are not appropriate for a thesis. Use the same font throughout the document. While illustrations may be in color, you should use only black type in your manuscript.

When printing your thesis, use a high quality ink jet or laser jet printer. Make sure the type is uniformly dark and crisp throughout the document. It is preferable that you print multiple copies of your thesis, but you may also take your manuscript to be professionally photocopied. Make sure that you request your thesis be photocopied on 25 or 100 percent cotton bond paper and not on regular photocopier paper. Do not photocopy your thesis yourself as that will lead to the thesis being on inappropriate paper and to poor copy quality.

Corrections

The final draft of your thesis should represent a carefully proofread document and be free of grammatical and spelling errors. However, if you do need to make a correction to the final draft of your thesis, do not use correction fluid as it can flake away. Instead, make corrections directly to the manuscript.

Pagination

Number ALL pages of your manuscript with the exception of the title page, signature page, and the copyright page. Begin numbering the pages with the dedication page or the acknowledgements page (if included). Otherwise, begin numbering with the table of contents. All numbered pages preceding the text of your thesis should be numbered with lower case Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, …). The text of your thesis should be numbered with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, …). Check the style guide that your advisor approved to determine whether numbers should appear in the header or footer of the thesis and whether they should be centered or in the right corner of the page.

Spacing

Indent every paragraph and double-space your manuscript, including the title page and copyright page. Check your selected style guide to determine whether long quotations, footnotes, the table of contents, and the bibliography should be single-spaced or double-spaced. Do not add extra spaces between paragraphs or sections.

Margins

To facilitate binding, the left margin of your thesis must be 1-1/2”. The remaining margins should be 1-1/4”. Page numbers and illustrations must fit within the specified margins. If an illustration is too large to fit into the margins, reduce it so that it will fit.

Illustrations

Tables, figures, graphs, etc. must be numbered. Numeration can be consecutive (Table 1, Table 2, Table 3, etc.) or can be double numbers according to the placement of illustrations within specific chapters. For example, Table 5.1 would be the first table in chapter five of your thesis.

High-quality photocopies of photographs are preferred to actual photographs. However, you may affix original photographs using paper cement. Photographs should be mounted on the same cotton bond paper that you are using throughout the thesis. All illustrations, including mounted photographs, must fit into the prescribed margins.
Checklist

1. Is your thesis paginated correctly?
2. Did you use your full and official name on the title page, copyright page, signature page, and vita?
3. Are the titles on the title page, signature page, and abstract exactly the same?
4. Are your margins correct?
5. Is your signature page on cotton bond paper?
6. Did you submit the required copies of your thesis to your department?
7. Did you submit two copies of your thesis to the library?

Prepared by Natalie Sommerville

Guidelines adapted from the University at Buffalo’s Guidelines for Graduation and Theses and Dissertation Preparation available at http://www.grad.buffalo.edu/grad-docs/adobe/pdf/thesesguide.pdf, the University of Texas at Austin’s Format for the Master’s Thesis and Report available at http://www.utexas.edu/ogs/pdn/pdf/format_guidelines-m.pdf, and the University of Rochester’s The Preparation of Doctoral Theses: a Manual for Graduate Students available at http://www.rochester.edu/Theses/index.html. The Checklist is adapted from the University of Texas at Austin’s checklist, which is included with their guidelines.