

THESIS GUIDELINES

University of Wisconsin—Whitewater
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INTRODUCTION

A thesis is a carefully crafted scholarly paper that presents an original argument. Students should begin to think conceptually about a possible thesis project early in their graduate program. The thesis grants the graduate student an opportunity to demonstrate expertise in their field, and must have a substantial original research component. Research often begins with a question. With a question in mind, students can begin to look for information relevant to its theoretical framework. Once a student is well-informed on their topic, their knowledge should help guide a sense of purpose for their thesis. A student is ready to begin writing a thesis when they can articulate that purpose clearly.

Academic policies related to the graduate program are published in the [Graduate Catalog](#). Each student is expected to consult with the specific thesis guidelines established by their academic program in order to produce an appropriately formatted thesis in accordance with University regulations. The signatures of the student's thesis committee members on the Signature page signify their assurance that the final document and the student's oral examination meet the program and university standards for excellence and scholarship.

The following guidelines are designed to assist students in preparing their theses, and to ensure that each thesis constitutes a clear and permanent document that represents a standard of quality appropriate for UW-Whitewater, and to assist students and their advisers in meeting the thesis format requirements established by the Graduate Council of the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

THE THESIS

The Thesis

Developed through focused research, the thesis is a student's contribution to their field of study, preparing them for both their academic and professional careers. A student can take justifiable pride in the work required of this capstone experience of professional progress. Additionally, the thesis demonstrates the student's

- expertise in his or her field of study and the student's ability to identify a significant research problem within his or her field of study,
- ability to design and implement inquiry appropriate to the identified problem,
- ability to present and synthesize the results of his or her inquiry,
- ability to draw informed conclusions from the synthesis of inquiry results, and
- understanding of the relevance of his or her conclusions to his or her field of study and implications for future inquiry.

The Thesis Committee

Graduate students in good standing may proceed to establish a thesis committee, typically after completing a year of full-time coursework in their program. Graduate students should consult with their academic advisor in selecting the members of the thesis committee.

The thesis committee must have a minimum of three members:

1. At least two of the thesis committee members must hold Level II (or above) graduate faculty membership, as defined by the UW-Whitewater Constitution of the Graduate Faculty.
2. The chair of the thesis committee must be a full time faculty member in the graduate student's academic department and hold Level II (or above) graduate faculty membership. The chair of the thesis committee is responsible for directing the research and guiding the preparation, submission and defense of the thesis.
3. Graduate students may also select a third thesis committee member from another university or an individual who can be granted an exception for Level II graduate faculty membership.

An exception for Level II graduate faculty membership must be approved by tenured faculty in the graduate program, by the college dean, and by the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies and Continuing Education. The chair of the thesis committee should complete the *Departmental Approval of Graduate Status Approval Form*, which will include the submission of a current academic vita and justification for approving the proposed third thesis committee member. These materials should be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Continuing Education. Current submission policies may be found in the [UW-Whitewater Constitution of the Graduate Faculty](#).

The Thesis Proposal

Students may need to comply with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and prepare the [Research with Human Subjects](#) or [Research with Animals](#) forms, if their thesis project requires it.

Graduate students should develop the thesis proposal in consultation with their thesis committee. Once the thesis proposal has been approved, students need to obtain permission from their department and then enroll in Thesis 799.

The Thesis Examination

Students must also pass an oral examination of their thesis, administered by the appointed thesis committee. The oral examination will be held in an open meeting and announced at least one week prior to the examination.

The decision of the thesis committee for approval or disapproval is determined by the majority of the committee members. Masters students may pass the oral examination but still be required to revise their dissertation. It is the responsibility of the thesis committee chair to review and approve revisions to the thesis. Thesis committee signatures on the thesis title page constitute recommendation for conferral of the thesis degree on the candidate. An electronic copy of the thesis including an unsigned title page and the original signed title page must be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Continuing Education.

All approved UW-Whitewater theses will be deposited in the UW-Whitewater Andersen Library and in the University of Wisconsin System's permanent digital repository, Minds@UW. If master's students would like a personal, bound copy of their thesis, the UW-Whitewater Andersen Library staff will bind a personal copy of the thesis, if students request one, for a nominal charge.

FORMAT

Style

A variety of style manuals are available to assist students in writing their thesis. However, these guidelines take precedence over any differing instructions. These minimum delineated specifications must be met in order for a thesis to be accepted by the Dean of Graduate Studies. Projects that do not meet these specifications will not be accepted. Students should determine whether their thesis fits compliance with these standards and requirements before they complete their thesis.

A department must inform the Dean of Graduate Studies in writing if they wish to adopt another style manual. Otherwise, all theses should be prepared according to the most current edition of the *Publication Manual* of the American Psychological Association.

Abstract

The preparation of an abstract is required of all students who write a thesis. Since these abstracts will be printed, distributed, and deposited in the libraries of other institutions as well as our own, they are official publications of UW-Whitewater and must be prepared properly. The format requirements for the abstract are the same as those listed for the thesis.

Two copies of the abstract must be submitted along with the thesis:

1. one copy of the abstract—the original—typed or printed on rag paper, and
2. the second may be a photocopy.

The abstract should not exceed 250 words in length, be double-spaced, and should not be hole-punched. The title of the thesis must be centered at the top of the first page, using both upper and lowercase lettering.

Bibliography

The bibliography should meet the style requirements of journals and books, as outlined by the *Publication Manual* of the American Psychological Association.

Appendices

Unusual or supplemental materials, such as questionnaires or copies of photographs, may be put in appendices. The appendix must be consecutively paginated with the text. The paper quality and margins of the appendix must conform to the standards for the rest of the thesis.

Reprints and Copyrighted Material

Students are responsible for obtaining and keeping records of written permission for the use of copyrighted material in their thesis. The copyrighted material very often includes photographs of works of art or musical score excerpts. A letter of request from the student to the copyright

holder is typically sufficient. Most often, the response is an approval stamp or signature on that letter, which is returned. In some cases, holders of copyright may request acknowledgement in a specific manner on each page.

Additional Requirements

Body. The body of the thesis should be double-spaced. The right margin should not be justified. Lengthy quotations, footnotes, and bibliographies may be single-spaced. Additionally, colored maps, charts, etc. are acceptable.

Margins. Margins should be set for 1 ½ inches from the top and left sides of the paper, and 1 inch from the bottom and right sides of the paper. Page numbers should generally be placed in the upper right-hand corner, 1 inch from both sides of the paper.

Pagination. Each page in a thesis must be assigned a number. The preliminary pages that precede the body of the paper are numbered using lowercase Roman numerals, set at the bottom center, one inch from the bottom of the page. Exceptions are as follows:

Title Page—*page i, no page number, counted*

Approval Page—*page ii, no page number, not counted*

The pages in the body of the thesis—including text, references and appendices—are numbered in Arabic numerals and placed in the upper right corner of each page, one inch from the side. Students are advised not to insert page numbers until the final editing stages of their thesis.

Page headers. Students should not use page headers, decorative borders, etc. in their thesis.

Equations, superscripts, and subscripts. Superscripts and subscripts may be one size smaller than the text. Equations may be formatted with double-spacing or other spacing necessary to clearly identity each equation.

Footnotes and endnotes. Footnotes and endnotes may be single-spaced. Footnotes for each chapter are usually numbered consecutively: at the bottom of the page, grouped at the ends of chapters, or grouped at the end of the thesis.

Submission

One electronic copy of the thesis and its abstract must be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies Office, in Portable Document Format (pdf), by the end of the term in which the student plans to graduate. Students should make all personal or departmental copies before submitting the thesis to the Graduate Studies Office. Students should carefully review their final copy prior to submission to save unexpected delays in submission, and to avoid the difficulty of correcting errors discovered later.

Students are responsible for knowing the appropriate deadlines for degree completion. The thesis and the *Thesis Approval Form* must be completed and filed in the Graduate Studies Office by the

date indicated in the Graduate Timetable for the appropriate term. Final resolution of issues related to the format of the thesis will be made in the Graduate Studies Office.

Checklist

In the order specified, please include the following pages in your final submission:

- Title Page
- Approval Page
- Acknowledgements—*optional*
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables or Figures—*if applicable*
- Abstract
- Body
- References
- Appendices

If necessary, please make sure to complete the following:

- Distribute proposal, IRB, and IACUC forms to thesis advisor.*
- Obtain approval from appropriate IRB or IACUC.*

For more information, contact The Graduate Studies Office: (262) 472-1006 or (800) 628-4559.

APPENDIX

Sample Pages

Title Page

Approval Page

Abstract

Sample Title Page

Title Page should start 2" from the top.

Place the Title of Your Thesis
Here

By

Your Name

(←1.5" left margin)

(1" right margin →)

A Thesis Submitted in
Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science (Spell out your degree)
List Your Program (Spell out your program)

At

The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

Month, Year of Publication

Do not insert a page number on the cover page, but it is considered page i.

Sample Approval Page

The Graduate Studies Office cannot accept your thesis without this page containing your thesis chair and committee members' original signatures. See the following format for an example of an adviser approval page.

Approval Page should start 2" from top.

Graduate Studies

The members of the Committee approve the thesis of

(Your Name) presented on (Month Day, Year of Oral Exam)

***Insert 4 lines between signatures, all signatures must be in black, permanent ink.
Be sure to use proper names of thesis committee members.***

Dr. Firstname Lastname, Chair

Dr. Firstname Lastname

Dr. Firstname Lastname

Dr. Firstname Lastname

(←1.5" left margin)

(1" right margin →)

Do not insert a page number on this page. It is considered page ii.

Sample Abstract

Abstract Page should start 2" from the top.

Place the Title of Your Thesis
Here

By

Your Name

The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, Year (year of submission/publication)
Under the Supervision of Dr. (your thesis adviser's name)

Text is double-spaced and maximum of 250 words.

The abstract summarizes the original work, and includes a brief statement of problem and its significance, a brief description of design of the study, and the main point of summary and conclusions. The abstract should not include comments, interpretations, or evaluations that do not appear in the thesis itself. It must follow the exact order of the content of the thesis, and it must retain the person, tense, and number used in the thesis. The abstract should appear in the bound thesis immediately following the approval page.

(←1½" left margin)

(1" right margin →)