

Thesis, Specialist Project, and Dissertation Guidelines

These guidelines are intended to assist graduate students and research committees with the preparation, formatting, and submission of theses, specialist projects, and dissertations to the WKU Graduate School for publication in the university library. Submission deadlines are posted on the Graduate School website. Review of content is the responsibility of the student and research committee. *Final responsibility for the form, accuracy, and completeness of the document lies with the student.*

STYLE AND FORMAT

Students should follow a style guide appropriate to their academic discipline; however, the WKU Graduate School Thesis, Specialist Project, and Dissertation Guidelines supersede all other style manuals and guidelines. Submissions should be in English, consistent in style and form, and conform to the following requirements.

Pages and Pagination

All pages shall be 8½”x11”. All page numbering should appear centered and 0.5” from the bottom edge of the page. Landscape pages are permitted, yet margins and numbering should remain in portrait style as prescribed. No additional headers or footers are accepted.

The Title and Signature pages are counted when numbering, but the page numbers should not appear on these pages. Lower case Roman numerals begin with “iii” on the Abstract page. The body should begin Arabic page numbering beginning with “1” and continuing through the end of the document.

Margins and Spacing

Page margins should be 1.0 inch on all sides.

Lines should be double-spaced throughout except: 1) where single-spacing is prescribed by a specific style guides (e.g. long quotations, computer programs, endnotes, footnotes, etc.); 2) the Title page; and 3) the title on the Signature and Abstract pages. See the Example Document for line spacing and measurements for the Title, Signature, and Abstract pages.

Text should be left-justified and paragraphs should begin with standard, consistent indentation. Exceptions to justification and indentions (but not margins) may be allowed to maintain artistic integrity for creative works.

Fonts

A standard 12 point font is required throughout including page numbering, headers, table of contents, table/figure headings, etc. Arial or Times New Roman fonts are suggested. Eccentric type styles are not permitted. Size of symbols, mathematical formulas, and footnotes may vary from 12 point as needed. Text must be black.

All fonts must be embedded to ensure that readers’ computers do not substitute fonts which can result in significant differences in output (particularly with symbols). To embed fonts when converting from Word to PDF:

1. In Word, choose "Print" from the File menu.
2. Choose "Adobe PDF" as the printer. (Adobe Reader [download instructions](#) if needed)

3. Select "Printer Properties" and *uncheck* "Rely on system fonts only; do not use document fonts"
4. Proceed to "Print" the PDF file.

File Format

Submissions must be in PDF (Portable Document Format) format. The file name submitted should be *lastname.80X#.department.document* (e.g. *Smith.800123456.biology.thesis*). Do not use any spaces in the file name.

ORDER OF APPEARANCE

(see Example Document for individual page requirements; capitalization of headers is denoted in the list below)

1. Title Page
2. Signature Page
3. ABSTRACT
The Abstract should summarize the content in less than 350 words. The title on the Abstract should be identical to the title on the Title Page and Signature Page.
4. Dedication (optional)
5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS (optional)
6. TABLE OF CONTENTS
The Table of Contents should contain page assignments of all sections *following* the Table of Contents, and not the Table of Contents itself or pages prior. Inclusion of sub-headers in the Table of Contents is at the discretion of the student and research committee.
7. LIST OF TABLES (if applicable)
8. LIST OF FIGURES (if applicable)
9. LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS (if applicable)
10. Body
Beginning with the Introduction, the content in the body of the document should follow the selected style guide for the discipline as directed by the research committee; however, these Guidelines supersede style guide formatting.
11. REFERENCES
This section may also be entitled WORKS CITED as prescribed by the chosen style guide. A BIBLIOGRAPHY header should not be used unless the list includes both sources cited within the work and additional sources that contributed to the work but were not cited within the document.
12. Appendices (if applicable)
Each APPENDIX [A, B, etc.] should begin on a new page. Arabic page numbering should continue through the end of the document.

SUBMISSION

Electronic Document

The Graduate School requires electronic submission of the final document in Adobe PDF format. The student assumes responsibility for all content and formatting. Submissions received by the Graduate School will be reviewed for compliance with these guidelines. The Graduate School will not make changes to the content. Documents that meet these guidelines will be published in the university library exactly as they are submitted. In addition, dissertations will be submitted to ProQuest. Submissions that do not adhere to these guidelines will be returned to the student for revision.

Exceptions to the formatting prescribed in these guidelines may be permitted if the student can demonstrate that the proposed exception is acceptable to the academic discipline. Final approval rests with the Graduate School.

Signature page

The Signature page will not be signed per se; digital and manual signatures will not be accepted. Students should type the names of the committee chair and members. Confirmation of successful defense will be recorded via submission of the Comprehensive Exam/Capstone by the committee chair.

Copyright Permission

Students must submit Copyright Permission to publish their work in the University Library (TopScholar) and ProQuest (dissertations only). Students may opt to embargo the release of their publication for up to 3 years or indefinitely.

Publication rights may be reserved to the author, subject to the provisions of research contracts, patent agreements, or other similar agreements made by the author with the dissertation or thesis advisor, the university, the funding agency, or other parties. Students may contact the [Library of Congress](#) to copyright their work.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Institutional Research Board (IRB) Approval

Institutional Review Board (IRB) at WKU is tasked with regulating research involving human subjects at WKU in line with all applicable federal, state and local regulations. If applicable, students are required to obtain approval verifying compliance prior to beginning research. This approval must be included in the appendix of the thesis, specialist project, or dissertation.

Academic Misconduct

The University expects students to operate with the highest standards of integrity in all facets of the collegiate experience. Broadly defined, academic misconduct is any unethical self-serving action in the performance of academic work, deliberate or unintentional, that affords a student an unfair, unearned, or undeserved advantage.

The maintenance of academic integrity is of fundamental importance to the University. Thus it should be clearly understood that acts of plagiarism or any other form of cheating will not be tolerated and that anyone committing such acts will be held accountable for violation of the [Code of Student Conduct](#).

Binding

The university does not require binding or offer services for binding. External binding service information is posted on the Graduate School website.

EXAMPLE DOCUMENT

The example document represents correct formatting according to these guidelines. For further assistance, contact the Graduate School, graduate.school@wku.edu.