

THESIS AND DISSERTATION HANDBOOK

Graduate College

Bowling Green State University

This handbook provides information on Graduate College requirements pertaining to thesis and dissertation manuscript style and format, as well as submission of the manuscript to the Graduate College via [OhioLINK ETD](#). It is designed to be used in conjunction with a professional writing style manual. A style manual should be chosen in accordance with the student's discipline/program and/or in consultation with the faculty advisor. This handbook supersedes the chosen style manual. **Because Graduate College requirements and style manuals change over time, students and faculty should not refer to earlier theses or dissertations as guides to style and format.**

Procedures and policies pertaining to thesis and dissertation committee formation, thesis and dissertation topic approval, and thesis and dissertation final examinations are included in [Master's Requirements](#), [Doctoral Requirements](#), and [Thesis/Dissertation](#) policies. Students should consider this Handbook as supplemental to those policies. Students should also consult with their graduate program coordinator and/or program handbook for additional, program-level requirements.

It is student's responsibility, and that of their committee, to ensure that the manuscript submitted to the Graduate College via [OhioLINK ETD](#) is well-written, conforms to the requirements of this Handbook and chosen style manual, and is free from spelling, grammatical, and typographical errors.

I. Selecting a Style Manual

A variety of style manuals are available that set standards for grammar, bibliographic format, word choice, etc. Some of the most commonly used are the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA), the *Chicago Manual of Style*, the *MLA Handbook* (Modern Language Association), and *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (Kate L. Turabian). Many disciplines, programs, and/or faculty require the use of a specific style manual; others leave the choice up to the student.

The thesis or dissertation must conform strictly to the specifications of this Handbook and the style manual selected. **In instances where the Handbook and the style manual differ, students must follow this Handbook regarding matters of format (required preliminary pages, margins, etc.) and the chosen style manual regarding matters of style (grammar, table formatting, references/bibliography/works cited, and footnotes/endnotes, etc.).**

II. Format and Style

A. General Notes

- The Graduate College requires students to use approved [templates](#) for theses and dissertations.
- Before submitting a thesis or dissertation to the Graduate College via [OhioLINK ETD](#), a student and faculty advisor must carefully proofread the entire document, using the checklist provided at the end of this Handbook.

- With the approval of the faculty advisor and program graduate coordinator, a student may wish to hire a professional copy editor.
- The final version of the thesis or dissertation manuscript must be converted to PDF format for submission to the Graduate College via [OhioLINK ETD](#). Adobe Acrobat is required to merge all files into one document including the title page, preliminary pages, the body of the text, and appendices. Acrobat Professional is also required to create bookmarks, fill in the Document Properties, embed fonts, and make the document accessible.
- All students writing theses and dissertations are encouraged to attend a [workshop](#) for more information. There are [videos](#) on the Graduate College website to help with using the [templates](#), uploading to OhioLINK ETD, and completing the Acrobat Professional requirements.

B. Fonts and Type Size

- Format the entire manuscript using Times New Roman font, 12-point size. Unless otherwise stipulated below (e.g., the size for footnotes can be 10-point), 12-point size font applies to all text in the manuscript including captions, notes, citations, etc.

C. Margins

- Set all margins at 1 inch.
- Text must be left justified only; leave the right margin ragged.
- All paragraphs must be indented ½ inch.

D. Page Numbers

- Except for the title page and copyright page, every page of the manuscript must include a page number in the top right corner. The page number should be set against the 1-inch right margin and approximately ¾ of an inch from the top of the page.
- Preliminary pages—excluding the title page and copyright page, which are not numbered—are numbered beginning with the lower-case Roman numeral: “ii” if there is no copyright page and “iii” if there is one.
- Arabic number 1 is assigned to the first page of the body of the text.

E. Spacing, Headings, Sections, and Subsections

- Double-space the entire manuscript. Do not include extra spaces between paragraphs.
- Except for new chapters/first level headings, the text should be more-or-less continuous, without hard page breaks between sections. Each new chapter/first level heading must begin on a new page.
- Chapters or their equivalents (e.g., INTRODUCTION, METHOD, RESULTS, etc.) are often divided into sections, and sometimes further divided into subsections, each preceded by a subheading/second and third level headings.
 - Chapter/first level headings are always written in all capital letters, both in the text and the Table of Contents.
 - The format of sections and subsection subheadings varies by style manual, but it must be consistent throughout the manuscript, and once the format has been determined, subheading levels for the sections and subsections should not be skipped.

- Some style manuals, such as that of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, require specific formatting for heading levels. Others, such as the *MLA Handbook*, use a numbering system and do not support word-level formatting such as italics or bold type. Check the style manual chosen and follow its required heading formats.
- Orphaned headings and subheading are not allowed. Each heading or subheading must have two to three lines of supporting text on the page where it appears; otherwise, it should be placed at the top of the next page.

F. Tense and Point of View

- Tense and point of view should follow disciplinary standards.

G. Quotations

- Most style manuals list individual requirements concerning the use and format of quotations. If the style manual chosen does not specify, format as follows:
 - Enclose a quotation less than three typewritten lines in length in quotation marks and work it into the existing paragraph.
 - If the quotation is more than three typewritten lines in length, delete the quotation marks and give it its own separate, block-indented paragraph.

H. Footnotes, Endnotes, and Parenthetical Citations

- Consult the chosen style manual for the preferred method for attributing quotations, paraphrases, and references to sources used: footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical citations. Use the same citation method and formatting throughout the manuscript.

I. Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Symbols

- The use of abbreviations, acronyms, or symbols is acceptable provided that proper clarification is given the first time used. Except for extremely common examples, proper form includes the term or phrase given in full immediately followed by the abbreviation in parentheses, e.g., “electron volts per molecule (ev/m).” The abbreviation, e.g., “ev/m”, is then used throughout the remainder of the manuscript without explanation or parentheses.
- A preface or appendix may be included listing all abbreviations, acronyms, and symbols with their meanings.

J. Foreign Words and Phrases

- Except in a thesis or dissertation written in a language other than English, it is customary to underline or italicize words taken directly from a foreign language (including Latin).
- Certain exceptions are permitted for words that have been absorbed into English, e.g., “et cetera.” If there are questions as to if a foreign word has been accepted into common American English usage, consult a dictionary or chosen style manual.

K. Use of Numbers

- The chosen style manual will dictate the proper use of numerals and/or the spelling out of numbers within the text.

III. Parts of the Manuscript

A thesis or dissertation manuscript has three basic parts:

- Preliminary pages;
- Body of the text; and
- Back matter.

The manuscript must be arranged in this order, even if it differs from what is specified in the chosen style manual. The required [templates](#) will ensure that the page numbering is correct, headings are accessible, and formatting for the preliminary pages is accurate.

A. Preliminary Pages:

1. Title Page

- The title page is required. It must use all caps and should accurately and concisely describe the topic.
- Do not use abbreviations or acronyms in titles.
- The date on the title page should be the month and year in which the degree is granted.
- List all committee members.

2. Copyright

- Copyrighting is optional. If the study has been copyrighted, the copyright page follows the title page and is not numbered.
- Information about Copyright can be found on our [website](#). Additional information is available from the [Copyright Office of the Library of Congress](#).

3. Abstract

- The abstract is required. It may not exceed 350 words (approximately 1½ pages double-spaced), and must be clear, informative, and concise.
- It is the first numbered page: use a lowercase Roman numeral in the top right corner, “ii” if there is no copyright page and “iii” if there is one.
- The advisor’s name and role (e.g., “Mary E. Smith, Advisor”) must appear between the page heading and the text. Do not include the advisor’s title (e.g., Dr.).

4. Frontispiece

- Though it is optional, some students choose to personalize their manuscript with a quotation or illustration.

5. Dedication

- A dedication page is optional. If included, the dedication page should not include a heading.

6. Acknowledgments

- Acknowledgments are used to recognize and express appreciation to the people who were influential in preparing and completing the manuscript. The Graduate College strongly recommends including an Acknowledgments page but does not require it.

7. Table of Contents

- A Table of Contents (TOC) is required. It must list all chapter/headings, section and subsection headings, the bibliography/references/works cited, and (if applicable) appendices. Preliminary pages are not included in the TOC
- TOC entries are double-spaced, without extra spaces. Each successive heading level (if applicable) is block-indented by an additional ½ inch.
- The headings of major sections (chapters, bibliography/reference/works cited, and appendices) are written in all capital letters.
- TOC headings must be identical to those in the text, including spelling, wording, punctuation, and capitalization; however, they should not include word format such as italics, bold, and underlining, except for Latin names and book/journal/film/play titles.
- Page numbers listed in the TOC must be right-justified. The required [template](#) is set to automatically format in this way. To do this formatting manually, highlight the body of the typed TOC and insert a right-tab just before the 1-inch right margin. Then add a tab between the leader dots and the page number for each TOC entry.

8. List of Figures, List of Schemes, List of Tables, etc.

- Title the table or figure headings exactly as they appear in the text.
- The required [template](#) includes a List of Figures and List of Tables already properly formatted.
- If figures, tables, or schemes are at the end of the text in an appendix, do not use a list. A list is only used when the items appear within the body of the text.

9. Preface

- A preface is optional. It is used to provide background information such as the motivation for the study, explanation of key terms or abbreviations, and/or the purpose of the manuscript. If included, it is placed immediately before page 1 of the text.

B. The Body of the Text

1. General Formatting

- Each paragraph must be ½ inch indented.
- Text should be:
 - continuous, without excessive white space between sections or before/after illustrative materials;
 - double-spaced;
 - black type; and
 - Times New Roman font, 12-point size. If the study uses footnotes, they may be formatted as 10-point size.

2. Tables, Figures, Illustrations, etc.

- If the study includes tables, figures, and/or other illustrative materials they must be inserted in the text near where they are first mentioned or placed together in an appendix at the end of the manuscript.

- Each table and figure must be centered on the page.
- If they are over 4 ½ inches in height, including table title/heading, source, and any footnotes or other explanation, they may be given a page of their own after the textual reference.
- If sizing is a determining factor, tables or figures may require landscape placement on the page. These pages should be rotated so that the text is consistent with the portrait style pages, including the page number.
- Tables can use Times New Roman and an 8-point size if this allows the table to be on one page.
- If the table requires more than one page, keep the 12-point size.
- Footnotes crediting an outside source should appear immediately below the table or figure. If an explanation is required, it should be single-spaced and placed immediately below the table or figure.

C. Back Matter

1. Bibliography/References/Works Cited

- Depending on the chosen style manual, the bibliography/reference/works cited will include either all cited works and sources consulted during the research and writing of the study, or only those cited in the text.
- The spacing, indentation style, information provided, and arrangement of the works listed must follow the specifics given in the chosen style manual.
- Entries must be double-spaced.
- Unless the chosen style manual stipulates otherwise, dictionary entries are not listed.

2. Appendix/Appendices

- An appendix may include tables, illustrations, photographs, figures, charts, graphs, sample questionnaires, etc.
- Appendices are lettered not numbered. They follow the Bibliography/References/Works Cited and are listed in all capital letters in the TOC (e.g., APPENDIX A. IRB LETTER).
- When previously printed items are included as appendices, they should be reduced in size to fit within the required margins.
- If the study includes approvals for use of copyrighted materials, those approvals must be included as an appendix.
- If the study involves IRB review and approval, including the IRB approval letter as an appendix is recommended.

IV. The Final Draft

All thesis and dissertation manuscripts are to be submitted to the Graduate College electronically via the [OhioLINK ETD Center](#). The manuscript must conform to the format and style requirements of this Handbook and the chosen style manual and be free of errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Students planning to graduate during a particular term must submit the final, error-free manuscript by the [posted deadline](#). No extensions to this deadline are granted. If a student submits a

manuscript after the posted deadline, they will not graduate until the following semester. In planning to meet the posted deadline, students must allow for a few hours to complete the formatting and submission process.

Questions related to formatting and submitting a thesis or dissertation to OhioLINK ETD should be directed to etd@bgsu.edu or 419-372-9888.

A. Submitting the ETD

- Once the thesis or dissertation is properly formatted and converted into a PDF, the next step is to submit the PDF to [OhioLINK ETD](#).
- To initiate this process, students need to access <http://etdadmin.ohiolink.edu>, and set up a “user account” which is available just beneath the login box.
 - The username should be the student’s complete BGSU email address (e.g. janedoe@bgsu.edu and NOT just janedoe). The Graduate College requires use of a BGSU e-mail as the username; contacting a student through an outside e-mail address is prohibited by FERPA.
 - Students must keep a record of their user account information in the event the BGSU ETD coordinator stipulates additional edits to the manuscript.
 - All communications about the submitted ETD will be conducted through official BGSU email accounts. As such, students should regularly monitor their BGSU email accounts in the weeks following ETD submission.
- Once a username and password for OhioLINK ETD has been established, students may upload their properly formatted PDF.
- When filling out the submission form in OhioLINK ETD, read each screen carefully.
- Students may need to replace special characters or formatting. Please contact the ETD Administrator at etd@bgsu.edu if assistance is needed with special characters.
- On occasion, a student may request a delay in the OhioLINK publication of a thesis or dissertation, also known as an embargo. This may apply if immediate release may negatively influence those publishing a book or seeking a patent. If this is the case, students must take the following steps:
 - Submit a [Request for Delayed Publication form](#) to the Graduate College.
 - Select the correct Delay in Publication information in OhioLINK.
 Generally, the Graduate College discourages the use of delayed publication without reasonable cause.

B. Final Review and Approval of ETD

- Once the thesis or dissertation manuscript has been submitted to [OhioLINK ETD](#) it will be reviewed by Thesis and Dissertation Services. If any problems are discovered with the submission, the student will receive an email sent to their BGSU account, which indicates any issues that need to be resolved before approval for final publishing is granted. Students should note that the review process may take a few weeks.
- Upon final approval and publication, the electronically submitted thesis or dissertation will become immediately available for download from the OhioLINK ETD website. Documents are published between four and six weeks after graduation.

C. Optional Thesis and Dissertation Binding

- Some programs require students to supply a bound hard copy of the thesis or dissertation. [BGSU Print, Copy, Mail](#) offers thesis and dissertation book binding. This is a high-quality hardback bind, with a variety of color covers from which to choose. Please contact BGSUprint@bgsu.edu or call 419-372-9633.

V. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE MASTER'S IN MUSIC COMPOSITION PROGRAM IN THE COLLEGE OF MUSICAL ARTS

Graduate students pursuing master's degrees in music composition submit an original musical composition as their thesis:

- All aspects of the composition must conform to specifications established by the College of Musical Arts.
- The manuscript must contain a title page, abstract, acknowledgments, appropriately-written introduction, other explanatory information concerning the composition, and pertinent bibliographic documentation. These must conform to the format and style requirements contained in this Handbook and follow the approved [templates](#).
- The only exception to stipulated formatting is that a score does not include a page number for page 1.
- Students submit the approved score/parts for the work to OhioLINK ETD.
- If the composition is performed, a recording, conforming to specifications established by the College of Musical Arts, may be included with the electronic manuscript submitted to OhioLINK EDT as a supplemental file.
- Music composition students must seek information from their program faculty to ensure proper completion of all programmatic requirements.

VI. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE MASTER OF FINE ARTS PROGRAM IN CREATIVE WRITING

Graduate students pursuing the Master of Fine Arts degree in Creative Writing submit their writing as their thesis.

- As with all theses written at BGSU, the manuscript must include all required preliminary pages; the creative writing is the body of the document. These sections of the thesis must conform to the format and style requirements contained in this Handbook and follow the approved [templates](#).
- An electronic version of the thesis manuscript is submitted to the Graduate College approved OneDrive. A link to this OneDrive is provided to the student after they submit an abstract to [OhioLINK ETD](#).
- After the formatting of the document is approved by the Graduate College, the student must print the entire manuscript (preliminary pages, body, and (if included) back matter), place it in a brown accordion file, affix a second copy of the title page to the front of the file, and submit it to the Department of English.

VII. Checklist

Document Formatting

Overall Document:

- Margins: 1 inch all around
- Font: Times New Roman, 12-point sized
- Entire Document is Double spaced
- Each new chapter begins on a new page
- Running page header cannot be on title page or preliminary pages
- Headings are consistent (i.e. Chapter 1 vs. One vs. I, Chapter 2 vs. Two vs. II, etc.)

Page Numbers:

- Preliminary pages are lower-case Roman numerals
- First page of Chapter 1/the body of the text begins with Arabic numeral one (1)
- Page numbers are placed in top right corner, $\frac{3}{4}$ inch down from top edge, 1 inch from right edge
- Pages are numbered consecutively through the last page of the document
- No page numbers are printed on the title and copyright pages

Title Page:

- Conforms to template provided by the Graduate College
- Does not include any degrees (i.e. Dr., PhD., EdD., etc.)
- Title matches Thesis/Dissertation Defense and Manuscript Approval Form

Abstract:

- Approximately 1½ pages or less, double spaced
- Starts on page ii if no copyright page, and iii if a copyright page
- Advisor's name (i.e. Mary E. Smith, Advisor) appears between the page heading and the text and is left justified.
- Does not include degree of advisor (i.e. Dr., PhD., EdD., etc.)

Table of Contents (TOC):

- Double spaced
- Page numbers are right justified
- Includes all chapter/headings, bibliography or references, appendices, and are in all capital letters and match the titles in the body of the manuscript

Appendices:

- Are appropriately titled (i.e. APPENDIX A, APPENDIX B, APPENDIX C etc.)
- Have page numbers in top righthand corner
- Are included in the TOC
- IRB letter or stamp is included as an appendix when required

Tables or Figures:

- More than 4 ½ inches in height including title, source, and note are on a separate page

Headings:

- 1st level headings are chapter headings and must be in all capital letters in the text
- Title of each heading matches what is written in the TOC
- 2nd, 3rd, etc. level headings are consistently formatted

PDF Creation

Acrobat Professional:

- All fonts are embedded
- All first level headings are bookmarked.
- Document Properties including title, author, subject, keywords are filled in
- Keywords are separated by semi colons (this is how someone will “Google” your document)

Accessibility:

- Each first level heading is styled as an accessible heading
- Each figure, scheme, and equation has alt text
- Tables cannot have merged or nested cells and each table includes alt text
- Table header rows are identified
- The language is set
- Hyperlink tags are set

Instructions for how to complete these requirements are located at the link provided below.

<http://www.bgsu.edu/graduate/thesis-and-dissertations/converting-your-document-to-pdf.html>

OhioLINK Submission

Paper Information:

- Title is written either in title case or sentence case
- Keywords separated by semi colons
- Year completed is filled in
- Total number of pages is filled in

Document Information:

- Degree year is filled in
- Each member of the committee is listed last name first
- In the Suffix field, include degrees for all committee members (i.e. PhD., EdD., JD, etc.)
- Role selected for Advisor or Committee Chair matches title page and abstract

Publication Information:

- Delay in publication (embargo) requested
- ProQuest is selected