

# Guide for Writers of Master's Theses

## Illinois State University

### Overview of the Thesis Process

#### Explore your topic and methods through preliminary research.

- Consult faculty members, your Milner Library subject librarian, and/or the Statistical Consulting Center as needed.
- Review university requirements for work with human subjects, animals or biohazardous material.
- Familiarize yourself with copyright and permissions requirements.

#### Choose a director, compose a committee, and develop a formal proposal.

- Obtain any required university IRB, IACUC and IBC permissions.
- Request any required permissions to use and/or reproduce material.
- Continue consulting with Milner subject librarian and Statistical Consulting Services as needed.
- Review Graduate School regulations for your committee; consult your thesis director and ask the department chair about any requests to be filed with the Graduate School for exceptions on committee members.
- In consultation with your thesis director and committee members, write a formal proposal.
- In consultation with your thesis director and committee members, establish a tentative timetable for submission of segments of the project.
- Defend the proposal in your department, if required.
- File the proposal form with the Graduate School by the deadline.
- Plan ahead to meet continuous registration requirements until your thesis is completed.

#### Write the thesis.

- Familiarize yourself with all format requirements and set up your word processing program accordingly.
- *If your program permits journal format and your committee has approved that format for your thesis*, secure a copy of the journal's instructions to authors and a copy of a sample article. You will need to submit those items along with the thesis at format check.
- Find out whether your program is single-approval or dual-approval.
- Set up a schedule to stay in touch with your thesis director and committee members on a regular basis.
- Secure permissions for material as needed, assemble letters for format examination.

#### As you enter the semester of completion...

- File for completion of your degree and any certificates that you are pursuing.
- Register for commencement if you will be participating and order your regalia (you are not required to participate.)
- Plan ahead to meet Graduate School deadlines for submitting a complete copy of the thesis for format check and securing the Right to Defend form. That form must be signed by the Graduate School format examiner *before* you schedule the defense.
- **The last full week of each semester before the degree completion date (fall/spring/summer) is reserved for checking the final copies of students who are slated to graduate that semester.** Students who are graduating in the following semester may still turn in pre-defense copies during that time, and pre-defense format checking will resume after the degree completion date.

#### Submit the thesis, secure the right to defend, and schedule the defense.

- Make any corrections required after the format check, then place copies of the thesis on file in your department for pre-defense review.
- Complete remaining paperwork for degree completion.

## **Defend the thesis. Note any required or recommended revisions.**

- Make revisions as needed until the thesis is acceptable to your committee and meets all disciplinary and university requirements; if yours is a dual-approval program, secure the departmental format approval form (not required for students from single-approval departments); submit final copies to Graduate School, along with required forms (see the checklist at the end of this booklet). After the final copies are approved by the Graduate School, make any additional copies that may be required by your program and submit those additional copies to your director.

## **The Thesis Process**

While completion of the thesis is often seen as the finish line of the master's program, it also marks your entrance into a wider academic community. Defense, deposit, and dissemination of your thesis all serve to make your ideas increasingly public. The thesis process is designed to help you prepare to address that widening audience.

A thesis is very different from a course paper or an independent study. Beyond your director, committee and academic discipline, the thesis is governed by rules set by the University Graduate School, the Office of Research Ethics & Compliance, Milner Library, and the US Copyright Office. The entire thesis process—preliminary research, proposal, research and drafting, revision, defense, final revision, and deposit—is integral to the master's degree thesis option. The Graduate School's guidelines and deadlines support the thesis process by assuring the opportunity for careful attention to each step.

Reading this entire guide now, asking questions in advance, and following all instructions carefully will help you navigate the process as smoothly as possible.

## **Dates and Deadlines <http://www.grad.ilstu.edu/downloads/datesanddeadlines.pdf>**

Setting your own target dates a few weeks before the deadlines allows you to avoid the end of semester rush and offers a margin of safety in case of delay.

While your director and other members of your committee may be willing to extend the time on an informal deadline that you have agreed upon—for instance, a date when you will submit a particular chapter draft for review—they cannot extend any Graduate School deadline or waive any requirement described in this guide.

If you are unable to meet any one of the Graduate School's requirements or deadline dates your graduation date may move forward to the next semester. You may still participate in the Commencement ceremony in the semester you had originally planned, and you may request an updated transcript as soon as you have met all requirements.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Upon completion of all requirements for the degree and final deposit of the thesis, the student requests a transcript and marks the "early check out" box on the transcript request form. A new transcript is then issued, including an official and dated notation line stating that all degree requirements have now been fulfilled and that the degree will be issued at the next graduation date.

Since no diplomas are issued at the ceremony, the student's participation will be identical to that of all other candidates for the degree. Diplomas are printed and mailed to all students approximately eight to ten weeks after the end of the semester in which the student completes degree requirements.

## **Preliminary research**

Preparation for a thesis begins with a thorough and thoughtful review of the research that has already been accomplished in your area, including recent theses and dissertations as well as publications. Sometimes students view the literature review as a sort of due diligence or patent search, an effort to be certain that no one has already written on their precise topic, but this step is much more than an avoidance of duplication. As you prepare to join an intellectual conversation in your field, your first task is to read, analyze, and acknowledge what has already been said.

**Milner Library's subject specialist librarians** in your discipline can help you locate all of the standard reference materials in your field, design effective search strategies, and alert you to new sources. There is no charge for their expert consultation. <http://www.library.ilstu.edu/directory/specialists.php>

**The university's Statistical Consulting Center (SCC)** is available to assist you with any statistical material. Their expert consultation is also free. <http://www.statscenter.ilstu.edu/>

## **Proposal & composition of the committee**

Details of the proposal process vary from program to program. In consultation with your thesis director, you will need to compose a thesis committee made up of members of the graduate faculty in your program, with the director of the committee and a majority of members holding full membership on the university's graduate faculty. If your topic is interdisciplinary or if there is a faculty member at another institution with special expertise in your area, the Graduate School may approve an exception to include one or more members from outside your department or outside this university. If most faculty members in your area are not yet full members of the graduate faculty, the Graduate School may approve an exception to include a greater proportion of associate members. All such requests must be supported by your department chair before they will be considered by the Graduate School. After you have successfully defended the proposal in your department and the Graduate School has accepted the proposal and the committee, your status as a thesis student becomes official.

**Proposal Approval Form for Research Leading to a Doctoral Dissertation or Master's Thesis**  
<http://www.grad.ilstu.edu/downloads/proposalapproval2.pdf>

**Exception form for Thesis/Dissertation Committee Member (if needed)**  
<http://www.grad.ilstu.edu/downloads/thesisexceptionform2.pdf>

**Research with or involving human subjects or animals, biohazards**  
<http://www.rsp.ilstu.edu/policy>

These types of research require advance review, permissions, and forms from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) or the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC). Failure to secure those permission forms and get them approved in advance carries serious risks. You may jeopardize your own funding, funding of others on campus, or even your ability to use your results in your thesis. Your department has an IRB representative to answer questions, or you may contact Research Ethics & Compliance (309) 438-8451.

It is the student's responsibility, not the format examiner's, to assure that the proposed research is in full compliance with all research review requirements and that all required forms have been approved. Should the format examiner notice an apparent violation of the approval requirements, she will not be able to issue the Right to Defend, clear your thesis for defense, or accept deposit for graduation unless/until Research & Sponsored Programs confirms that your research has been approved.

**Theses that are not in compliance with all university research approval requirements will not receive a Right to Defend form and will not be accepted for deposit and degree completion at the Graduate School. Graduate School deadlines will not be extended for theses that are not in compliance with research requirements.**

## **Securing permissions for use and/or reproduction of copyrighted material**

Theses are deposited with the university and made public in Milner Library. They carry with them a level of regulation that is distinct from class projects or term papers. The early stage of research is the time to read up on the intricacies of citation, copyright and permissions, and to ask questions as needed. Details on what requires written permission versus what is considered “fair use” can be found at the web sites of Milner Library <http://www.library.ilstu.edu/page/157> or the US Copyright Office <http://www.copyright.gov/> Should you have questions after reading those sites, you can contact the university’s copyright specialist through the Milner Library web site. A sample permission request letter is posted at [http://www.grad.ilstu.edu/downloads/thesis\\_copyright\\_permission\\_request.pdf](http://www.grad.ilstu.edu/downloads/thesis_copyright_permission_request.pdf) Some copyright holders may require that you fill out a form that they supply.

**Plagiarism and copyright law are separate issues.** All borrowed material must be properly cited in order to avoid plagiarism, but quoting or reproducing material of particular types and lengths *also* requires written permission from the copyright owner. In other words, even if you cite all borrowed materials accurately and do not plagiarize at all, if any of those materials require copyright permission and you fail to obtain it then you will still be in violation of copyright law. Do not wait until you have finished writing to begin thinking about permissions: request them as soon as you decide to use the material. Locating the right person, writing your request for permission, and waiting for the response can take months. Be certain to keep copies of all correspondence with copyright owners.

**Students who use surveys and other assessments developed by others should pay especially careful attention to the difference between permission to *use* an instrument in research and *report the results* versus permission to *reproduce* the instrument itself or parts of it.** For example, the copyright holder may grant permission for you to use a certain psychological assessment test in your research and report your findings, but still withhold permission to reproduce questions from that test in your thesis or reproduce the instrument in the appendix.

**Co-authored works may require written permission from all co-authors.**

**Under certain circumstances, you may need written permission to include your own writing.** If you have already published some of the work that you plan to use in your thesis, or if any of that work was done as “work for hire” on a grant or for an employer (for example, you were hired to write a training manual for your employer and you would like to include segments of that manual in your thesis), it is possible that someone else now holds the copyright to that writing, even though you are the author. Find out well in advance who holds that legal copyright. If someone else—a grant agency, publisher, or a current or former employer, for instance—holds the copyright, then you will need to obtain written permission before you can include those items or segments of them in the thesis.

**In special situations, and only with the approval of the thesis committee, the department chair/school director or designee, and the Graduate School, students may collaborate on some aspects of the work contributing to their theses.** However, each thesis submitted to the Graduate School for approval must be a unique product with the degree candidate as the sole author and with due acknowledgment of the contribution of collaborators. The individual student must demonstrate to her or his committee satisfactory command of all aspects of the work presented.

**It is the student's responsibility, not the format examiner's, to assure that the thesis is in full compliance with permissions requirements before the deadline for the first format check. Should the format examiner notice an apparent violation of copyright law, she will not be able to issue the signed Right to Defend, the document that clears your thesis for scheduling the defense, or accept deposit for degree completion until you do one of the following:**

- a) provide a copy of a published statement that the copyright holder has agreed to make that material available for use and/or reproduction without permission;
- b) provide a written opinion from the university's copyright specialist stating that the material in question may be used and/or reproduced in a thesis and placed in Milner Library without a permission from the copyright holder;
- c) provide the appropriate written permission from the copyright holder for your use and/or reproduction of the material; or
- d) (with the approval of your committee) rewrite the thesis to omit the material for which you needed permission.

Graduate School deadlines will not be extended for theses that are not in compliance with copyright law.

## **Establishing & maintaining a writing schedule**

At the time of the proposal you and your thesis director should establish a tentative schedule for the submission of draft chapters. As you write, stay in touch regarding deadlines for drafts and when you should send copies to your other committee members. Some directors and committee members are willing to read electronic attachments of early drafts instead of hard copies. Ask what your readers prefer.

## **Writing the thesis**

Across the country most graduate students now type their own theses directly into a computer.<sup>2</sup> It is strongly recommended that you use a standard word processing program and that you enter all text starting with your working notes and first draft. Check to find out which style manual your program accepts, and follow the most recent edition of that manual. Your thesis must also conform to the university-wide requirements for all theses (later in this document.) If there is a conflict between the instructions in your style manual and the university-wide requirements, follow the university requirements.

You can make the thesis process smoother by reviewing format requirements before you start entering text, setting up correct format, and adding formatted entries to your reference pages as you go. Most students do a great deal of revision as they work on the thesis, and committees often require further revisions after the defense. If you prepare your own text now you will be able to make any needed changes in preliminary or final versions at your convenience. You may want to bring a few sample pages to the format examiner early on, just to confirm that you have everything set up correctly.

---

<sup>2</sup> The Graduate School does not endorse or recommend typists. Students who choose to hire typists should be aware that the format examiner communicates only with the student, never with the typist. Employing a typist does not guarantee that the document will meet university requirements, and it remains the student's responsibility to meet all requirements and deadlines.

You may need to change the default settings on your word-processing program in order to meet format requirements. Please be aware that the Graduate School format examiner is assigned only to identify and bring to your attention any elements of the thesis that do not meet requirements. It is your responsibility to arrange to meet those requirements. The format examiner is not assigned to proofread your work; edit it for grammar, spelling, content, or organization; make copyright, permissions, or research board queries on your behalf; explain your discipline's style manual; diagnose or correct underlying errors in computer formatting; or teach you how to make changes in electronic files.

The body and notes of this brochure are **not** samples of thesis format. Format rules for theses are discussed in the pages that follow, and sample pages are included at the end. Do not attempt to use a previous thesis as your format guide; follow all current rules as written.

**Deadlines will not be extended for students whose theses fail to meet department and/or university requirements. You will need to make any necessary changes and print (or reprint) your thesis in time to meet the published deadlines.**

## **Journal format**

If your program permits journal format and your committee has approved that format for your thesis secure a copy of the journal's instructions to authors and a copy of a sample article to inform your preparation of the thesis. You will also need to submit those items along with the thesis at format check.

## **University-wide requirements for all theses**

These requirements apply to all theses, regardless of whether the student's program has chosen single format approval or dual format approval. In the event of a conflict between a program's style manual and university-wide format requirements, the thesis must follow the university format.

**1. Print or copy page quality** Laser-printing is preferred. High-quality photocopying is acceptable.

- Crisp, dark black characters are required.       All pages must be single-sided.
- Erasure, ink-removal, correction fluids and correction strips are not acceptable; any page containing an error must be reprinted and replaced.       No smudges or stray copy marks on any page.

**2. Paper specifications for the two final library copies (archived and shelved, not returned)**

- unlined 8 ½ X 11 white paper       at least 25% rag or cotton content       at least 20 lb weight
  - At least one of those two copies must carry original ink (black preferred, blue acceptable) signatures on each page that requires a signature; the other library copy may have photocopied signatures on those pages
  - Each of the two library copies must include 4 blank sheets of the same paper each (8 total) for use in binding.
- Recycled paper that meets all stated criteria is acceptable. Erasable paper is not acceptable. Use of Illinois State University or any state or academic institution's watermarked stationery is prohibited. No special paper is required for the copy submitted for the Right to Defend.

## **3. Font**

Arial, Courier New, Georgia, Times New Roman, Trebuchet MS and Verdana are pre-approved fonts (standard forms of these fonts only, no script, italic or ornamental variations.) Consult your director to find out which font is most commonly used in your field and use that one font throughout.

Italics may be used for non-English words and for titles as directed by the style manual specified by your program. Underlining in place of italics is acceptable if permitted by your style manual. Use of either italics or underlining must be consistent throughout.

Students who would like to use a different standard legible font must present a sample page of text, marked with the name of the font, and secure advance written approval from both their thesis director and the Graduate School format examiner, who will sign and date that sample page and place it in the student's file. For creative works such as visual poetry that may involve non-standard fonts or formats, the student needs to secure advance written approval from both the thesis director and format examiner prior to the deadline for format check.

#### **4. Type size and line spacing**

- 10, 11, or 12 point and consistent throughout. Adjustment in type size is permitted within tables and figures.
- Follow exactly the spacing requirements for each of the pages unique to theses (see item #7.)
- Double-space the body of the manuscript. Triple or quadruple spacing is permissible to set off figures or illustrations. Single spacing is permitted if directed in the style manual specified by your program for quotations set in as paragraphs, captions, items in tables, lists, graphs, charts, footnotes/endnotes, bibliographic entries, and lists in appendices.
- Keep two lines of text with each new heading. Otherwise, "widows" and "orphans" are acceptable.

#### **5. Margins**

- Preliminary pages unique to the thesis have their own requirements (see item # 7.)
- 1.5 inch left, 1 inch right, 1 inch top, and 1 inch bottom on all pages *except* 2 inch top margin on the first page of each chapter, the first page of the reference section, and the first page of each appendix.
- All material including page numbers, figures, footnotes/endnotes, and full-page images must be inside the margins.
- Justified right margins are strongly discouraged; your text should be "ragged right."
- In setting up any centered headings, titles, or numbers, centering should take place within the 6.0-inch-long typing line (the center point of the line is 4.5 inches from the left edge of the paper due to the wider margin on the left hand side.)

#### **6. Format and placement of page numbering**

- Do not number your annotation, abstract, title, copyright, and approval pages.
- Number preliminary pages (acknowledgments, contents, tables and figures list, etc.) with lowercase Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv).
- Number all other pages, including references and appendices, with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4).
- No headers, footers, titles, names, decorative hyphens, periods or other devices may be added to the page numbers.
- Number font must match text font (same type and size)
- The total number of pages identified on the Annotation and Abstract pages must match the page number on the last page of the thesis (last page of references if there are no appendices, otherwise the last page of the last appendix.)
- There are two choices on number placement. Consult your style manual to see which is more appropriate for your discipline. Whichever one you choose must be consistent throughout. Either all numbers are centered on the 1" bottom margin **or** all numbers are placed at the top right corner (on the intersection of the 1" top and 1" right margins) *except* on first page of each chapter, first page of reference section and first page of each appendix where the number is centered on the 1" bottom margin.

#### **7. Pages unique to theses** Format on these pages must match exactly the samples at the end of this guide.

- annotation page (your department may waive the signature requirement on the annotation page, in which case the names and signature lines are omitted from the page)
- abstract page (your department may waive the signature requirement on the abstract page, in which case the names and signature lines are omitted from the page)
- title page
- copyright page (if you choose to give copyright notice)
- approval page (this page requires committee names and signatures, cannot be waived)

- acknowledgments page (if you choose to include acknowledgments)
- contents page/s
- tables page (if you have tables that are not in an appendix)
- figures page (if you have figures that are not in an appendix)

**8. Copyright law** In addition to proper citation of all borrowed material, all theses must comply with applicable US copyright law.

**9. Compliance with university research regulations.** All theses involving human subjects, animals, or certain hazardous substances must comply with applicable university regulations (IRB, IACUC, IBC) and present approved compliance forms. Theses not in compliance will not be accepted for format check. The Right-to-Defend form will not be issued and the defense cannot be scheduled. Contact the Office of Research and Sponsored programs or your department's IRB representative before beginning research in these areas.

**10. Diagrams, photos, and other illustrations**

- Computer-generated text and images are preferred.
- All photos, illustrations, lettering and drawing must be of professional quality.
- Black and white is preferred. Color is acceptable, but please consider that color coding of data may be compromised by copying.
- All final copies must have identical photos or illustrations.
- Adhesive tape and glue are not acceptable.

**11. Oversized or unusual materials (for example, maps or CDs)** Consult the format examiner before preparing your final copies. You will receive individual instructions for folding, placing and securing materials to meet Milner Library requirements for shelving and archiving.

**This concludes the university-wide requirements.**

**On matters of format beyond university requirements, has your program selected single-approval, or dual approval?**

All students follow both university requirements and department requirements. The difference between single and dual approval lies only in who will perform the check and sign the approval for for each type of requirement. All programs are single-approval unless they have filed a dual-approval form with the Graduate School.

**If yours is a single-approval program** the Graduate School format examiner will check for compliance with *both* the university-wide requirements *and* the style guide or manual chosen by your department. The format examiner can tell you which manual/s your department has registered with the Graduate School. In instances where the manual offers two or more options, check with your thesis director to see which option is appropriate for your work. Follow that one consistently throughout your document.

**If yours is a dual-approval program** the department will check any matters of format/style that fall outside university-wide requirements, and the Graduate School format examiner will check for compliance with the university-wide requirements. In instances where the style manual specified by your department offers two or more options, check with your director to see which option is appropriate for your work. Follow that one consistently throughout your document.

**In the event that a style manual or journal conflicts with university-wide requirements, you must follow the university-wide requirements.**

Students from dual-approval departments will need to bring a signed departmental format approval form along with the thesis when they submit for final format review at the Graduate School. (Students from single approval departments do not need this form.) Ask your department chair whether the departmental format authority is the same faculty member for all theses in the department, or the individual director for each thesis. Consult that departmental format authority on any questions of format/style other than university rules. Consult the Graduate School format examiner on questions regarding university rules.

**Format approval form for dual approval departments** (available online in the thesis section of [www.grad.ilstu.edu](http://www.grad.ilstu.edu))

## **Approaching the defense**

Eventually a day will come when your director and committee members agree that you are ready to schedule the defense. The term for this event harkens back to the Middle Ages, when candidates were expected to stand in public and defend their arguments against all comers in order to demonstrate that they were worthy of the academic title they sought. Defenses are still public. They are advertised throughout the university and anyone is welcome to attend. Most programs provide details of the defense in their graduate handbooks. Your graduate coordinator can answer any further questions on how you should prepare.

You will need to plan the defense well in advance to assure that all members will be available, and that you will have time to meet all university deadlines before and after the defense. Students who are thinking of requesting summer defenses need to bear in mind that most faculty members are not on contract over the summer. They may have limited availability to meet for a defense, or may not be available at all until August 15. The Graduate School will not waive deadlines or rush format checks.

## **First format check**

Once your director and committee members have confirmed that you are ready to defend, and not later than 10 business days before tentative date of the oral defense, you will need to present a complete, accurate and properly formatted copy of your thesis to the format examiner in the Graduate School, 309 Hovey Hall. Since this is not a final copy, it does not need to be on any specific type of paper. *If your program permits journal format and your committee has approved that format for your thesis, you will need to submit the thesis, a copy of the journal's instructions to authors, and a copy of a sample article from that journal at the same time you submit the thesis for format check.* The thesis must be left in the Graduate School office for 3 full business days for this first format check. Partial days do not count. An appointment will be made for a meeting to discuss the examiner's findings.

## **Securing the Right-to-Defend form & scheduling the defense**

No later than 7 business days before the oral defense, you must meet with the examiner to discuss the format check findings. Providing that the thesis meets university requirements, the examiner will sign the Right-to-Defend. If the thesis does not yet meet requirements for defense, you will need to make any necessary changes before the Right-to-Defend form will be issued. With a signed Right-to-Defend form you are cleared to schedule your defense with your department (your director will complete the remainder of the form to report the results after the defense has taken place.) You then make examination copies and place them in your department office for review by interested persons prior to the oral defense.

## What to expect at the defense

In most defenses the candidate first summarizes the research and findings in a talk, and then answers questions. After that, the candidate leaves the room while the committee members discuss the defense, and finally the candidate is called back in to hear the result. Typically the meeting ends in congratulations, but it is possible to fail a defense. It is very common for committees to require revisions, perhaps even substantial ones, based on points that arise at the defense. Committees may also make suggestions, which a candidate is free to accept or reject. Keep careful notes so that you are clear on which revisions are required by your committee and which are optional, because any required changes must be completed and approved before you can submit your thesis for the final format check and deposit.

## Revision & deposit

Once you have completed all required revisions and incorporated any suggestions as you choose, you are ready to deposit the thesis. Submit to the format examiner in 309 Hovey....

- 2 final copies of the thesis, unbound, prepared in accordance with the *Guide for Writers of Theses*
- the original Right-to-Defend form, now completed and signed by your director to report on the defense
- 1 copy of the Departmental Format Approval--only if your program is dual-approval (available online at [www.grad.ilstu.edu](http://www.grad.ilstu.edu))
- 8 extra blank pages of the paper used for the final copies
- An index card or a piece of paper with an address, phone number, and/or e-mail address where you can be reached for the next six months in the event that any issue arises during binding of your thesis for the library. If you are not certain of your future contact information, please provide contact information for a family member or friend through whom you can be reached.

The committee members and the department or college office may require additional final copies of the thesis, and may require particular types of paper or binding for those additional copies. The instructions in this guide govern only the copies to be deposited in the Graduate School.

## Illinois State University Policy on Intellectual Property

1. The original records (including software) of an investigation for a graduate thesis or dissertation are the property of the University but may be retained by the student at the discretion of the student's major department.
2. The University shall have, as a condition of the degree award, the royalty-free right to retain, use, and distribute a limited number of copies of the thesis or dissertation, together with the right to require its publication for archival use.

A variety of other factors may affect copyright ownership. Please see Section 4.1.40 (Copyrights). A. (Ownership) of Illinois State University's policy on Intellectual Property available on the University's web site at <http://www.policy.ilstu.edu>.

## Copyrighting your thesis

As detailed on the web site of the United States Copyright Office <http://www.copyright.gov/> by the act of creating and writing a work you already own the copyright (subject to certain exceptions if any of the work was created for hire or previously published.) You may choose to place a copyright notice page at the beginning of your thesis without paying any fees or filing any forms. The US Copyright web site also explains the difference between *notice* and *registration*. You may register your copyright yourself by submitting forms and payment directly with the United States Copyright Office, or you may choose not to register.

## **Continuous Registration**

A master's student who is writing a thesis and who has completed all degree requirements, including approval of the Proposal, must maintain continuous registration each semester with either thesis hours (499) or one semester hour of thesis audit (499.01). This requirement does not apply to the summer term unless the student is graduating at the end of that term (August). This regulation applies to any master's student planning to graduate with a thesis option, regardless of the catalog under which the student entered. A thesis student who has completed the required 4-6 semester hours of 499, has completed all course work on the plan of study, and whose "Research Proposal Approval Form" has been accepted by the Graduate School may apply for one hour of thesis audit (499.01). The student must contact the Graduate School (309/438-2583) to request registration for 499.01. After the student has been registered for 499.01 for one fall or spring semester, the Registration Office will automatically register and bill the student for 499.01 each fall and spring semester until continuous registration is interrupted, either by non-payment of the tuition bill or by successfully meeting all graduation requirements. Any student interrupting continuous registration without obtaining a leave of absence from the Graduate School must, upon re-enrollment and/or reinstatement, pay tuition for one credit hour of 499.01 for each of the delinquent semesters. Any student requesting reinstatement in a degree program must direct an application for re-admission to the Graduate Admissions Office.

## **Commencement**

Participation in the commencement ceremony is not required. No diplomas are distributed there; all diplomas are mailed 8-10 weeks after the semester ends. Master's graduates who plan to participate in the ceremony must register beforehand and purchase regalia, including cap, gown and academic hood. They may invite as many guests as they wish. No advance registration or ticket is required for guests.

Some colleges instruct the master's candidates to enter the ceremony wearing the hood; others instruct candidates to enter the ceremony carrying the hood and bring it with them when they are called to the stage. You will receive specific instructions from Commencement Services staff.

## **Advice from successful writers of theses**

Writing a thesis can be great intellectual fun, but it is also very hard work. In contrast to the social contact and camaraderie of courses, research and writing can be isolating and lonely. Without those due dates and class hours, it can be difficult to reserve time for research and writing when you are facing a host of other responsibilities at work and at home. Many students who once looked forward to finishing their classes so that they could get to the thesis are surprised when they discover a certain nostalgia for coursework. Here are some observations that have helped other students get through difficult patches in their research and writing.

As with any project, the first step is to break it down into manageable steps. While it is not realistic to put "write a thesis" on your list of things to do today, you can plan ahead to read or write for a set time each day. Make yourself work every day for that scheduled amount of time, whether or not you are feeling in the mood to research or write. Treat your thesis as you would a job. You don't wait for that "special work mood" to strike before you go to work.

Set informal deadlines for submission of chapters to your director, and regard them as seriously as due dates for term papers. Cite your deadlines to explain why you cannot take on other tasks: *I'd like to help you paint that fence this weekend, but I owe my thesis committee a chapter by Monday.*

Check in often. Sometimes the most important time to contact your director is when you would rather not, because you have gotten stuck and are starting to fall behind schedule. Your first impulse may be to avoid contact and hope that the director forgets that chapter one was due last week. Resist that impulse and instead call or e-mail as soon as you stop making progress, even if it is well before the next due date. A quick consultation can help you get back on track.

Once you do get that first chapter draft written, it is best not to hover over it for months, making minor revisions until you think it is just perfect. Holding on to that first draft too long can make you resistant to criticism and perhaps even resentful. *How can my director say this section isn't clear? I already rewrote it sixteen times.* Submit the first draft for comment immediately, and expect to make quite a few changes. Once you have submitted a draft, do not just wait for it to come back. Start working on another chapter.

Students who come through the thesis stage with flying colors are usually the ones who develop a realistic and productive attitude as well as a schedule. They start with sensible premises. *Of course this first draft of chapter one won't be perfect; I've never written a thesis before. Reading the comments and revising will help me figure out how to improve it. As I get the hang of this type of writing my first draft of the next chapter will be better.* They envision the director as their mentor and ally rather than their judge. Those students will still be tired and frustrated sometimes, but at the end they will be confident scholars, ready to take on their next project.

Now consider the students who start with different premises, for instance *obviously the first draft should be perfect before I send it to my director; if the director has any suggestions it will be a sign that I have failed.* Students who adopt this approach are likely to take longer to finish, and to emerge feeling battered and bruised. As they see it, they were constantly failing to meet expectations (mostly their own, of course.) Not only will realism help keep you moving during your writing, at the end you will be better prepared to move on to the next stage in your career.

## Steps to completion of the master's thesis

**Review Graduate School Dates & Deadlines online at [www.grad.ilstu.edu](http://www.grad.ilstu.edu)** Completing these steps before the deadlines will reduce the risk of delaying graduation if substantial revisions are required after your defense or if the thesis does not meet other requirements.

### **First format check Submit copy at least ten business days before the tentative oral defense date**

□ For the format check, the thesis must be complete, accurate, properly formatted and printed, single-sided. Electronic copies, single-spaced copies or double-sided copies are not acceptable. After completing and proofing your thesis, submit the thesis and copies of any required copyright permission letters to the Thesis Examiner in the Graduate School Office, 309 Hovey Hall. If you are using human subjects, animals or biohazardous materials you must also have IRB approval numbers on file with the Research Office. *If your program permits journal format and your committee has approved that format for your thesis, you must also submit a copy of the journal's instructions to authors and a copy of a sample article before this deadline.* No special paper is required for this preliminary copy.

### **Appointment for discussion of results. At least 7 business days before the projected oral defense.**

□ When you have submitted your thesis, the format examiner will contact you to schedule a date and time to discuss the results. The format check normally takes three working days, so plan on at least that much time between submission and appointment. If your thesis meets requirements, at that appointment she will give you a signed Right to Defend form. You must have that form BEFORE you schedule a defense.

□ After you have the Right to Defend you may contact your department, file the required examination copies there, and schedule your defense.

## **After the defense**

- Make all changes required by your committee and the format examiner. If your committee also made suggestions but did not require them, those changes are optional.
- Proofread and prepare your final copies to meet all specifications in latest edition of the *Guide for Writers of Theses* (available online at [www.grad.ilstu.edu](http://www.grad.ilstu.edu)) Use the "Preparing the final copies of your thesis" sheet to confirm that your copies are ready to deposit.

## **Final Deposit See Dates & Deadlines.** Submit to the format examiner in 309 Hovey

- 2 final copies of the thesis, prepared in accordance with the latest version of *Guide to Writers of Master's Theses*
- 1 copy of the Departmental Format Approval--only if your program is dual-approval (available online at [www.grad.ilstu.edu](http://www.grad.ilstu.edu))
- the original Right-to-Defend form, now completed and signed by your director to report the outcome of the defense
- 8 extra blank pages of the paper used for the final copies
- An index card or a piece of paper with an address, phone number, and/or e-mail address where you can be reached for the next six months in the event that any issue arises during binding of your thesis for the library. If you are not certain of your future contact information, please provide contact information for a family member or friend through whom you can be reached.

## **Preparing the final copies of your thesis**

**To minimize the likelihood of further corrections, reprinting expenses, and delays in acceptance and graduation, please use this extra copy of the checklist to confirm each item as you prepare your copies.**

**University-wide requirements for theses** Checked by Graduate School format examiner on all theses.

### **1. Print or copy page quality**

- All characters crisp, dark black.
- All pages are single-sided.
- Free of smudges & stray copying marks.
- No erasures/ink-removal/correction fluid/strips; any page containing an error has been reprinted and replaced.

### **2. Paper specifications for the two library copies**

- No erasable paper.
- No Illinois State University or any state/academic institution's watermarked stationery.
- All pages on identical paper, unlined 8 ½ X 11 white, at least 25% rag or cotton content, at least 20 lb weight.
- On at least one copy, original black or blue ink signatures on each page requiring signature (other copy may have photocopied signatures)
- Each copy includes 4 blank sheets of the same paper each (8 total) for binding.

### **3. Font**

- Font must be Arial, Courier New, Georgia, Times New Roman, Trebuchet MS or Verdana (standard form of font only, no script, italic or ornamental variations, same font throughout) Any exception has been pre-approved by both director and examiner.
- Italics used only for non-English words and for titles as directed by the style manual specified by student's program. Underlining in place of italics is acceptable if permitted by style manual. Use of either italics or underlining is consistent throughout.

### **4. Type size and line spacing**

- 10, 11, or 12 point and consistent throughout (Adjustment in type size is permitted for tables.)
- Spacing requirements followed exactly on each of the pages unique to theses (see item #7.)
- Body of the manuscript double-spaced. (Triple or quadruple spacing permissible to set off figures or illustrations. Single spacing permitted if directed in the style manual for: quotations set in as paragraphs, captions, items in tables, lists, graphs, charts, footnotes/endnotes, bibliographic entries, and lists in appendices.)
- At least two lines of text accompany each new heading. (Otherwise, "widows" and "orphans" are acceptable.)

## 5. Margins

- Preliminary pages unique to the thesis follow all requirements (see item # 7.)
- 1.5 inch left, 1 inch right, 1 inch top, and 1 inch bottom on all pages *except* 2 inch top margin on the first page of each chapter, the first page of the reference section, and the first page of each appendix.
- All material including page numbers, figures, footnotes/endnotes, and full-page images must be inside the margins.
- In setting up any centered headings, titles, or numbers, centering is within the 6.0-inch-long typing line.

## 6. Format and placement of page numbering

- Do not number your annotation, abstract, title, copyright, and approval pages.
- Number preliminary pages (acknowledgments, contents, tables and figures list, etc.) with lowercase Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv).
- Number all other pages, including references and appendices, with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4).
- No headers, footers, titles, names, decorative hyphens, periods or other devices may be added to the page numbers.
- Number font must match text font (same type and size)
- The total number of pages identified on the Annotation and Abstract pages must match the page number on the last page of the thesis (last page of references if there are no appendices, otherwise the last page of the last appendix.)
- There are two choices on number placement. Consult your style manual to see which is more appropriate for your discipline. Whichever one you choose must be consistent throughout. Either all numbers are centered on the 1" bottom margin **or** all numbers are placed at the top right corner (on the intersection of the 1" top and 1" right margins) *except* on first page of each chapter, first page of reference section and first page of each appendix where the number is centered on the 1" bottom margin.

## 7. Pages unique to theses

Format on each page must match exactly the sample in the guide.

- annotation page (department may waive the signature requirement on the annotation page, in which case the names and signature lines are omitted from the page)
- abstract page (department may waive the signature requirement on the abstract page, in which case the names and signature lines are omitted from the page)
- title page
- copyright page (optional)
- approval page (requires committee names and signatures, cannot be waived)
- acknowledgments page (optional)
- contents page/s
- all items listed on contents page match word-for-word the items referenced in the thesis
- all page numbers listed on contents page match the page where that item is located in the thesis
- tables page (if you have tables that are not in an appendix)
- figures page (if you have figures that are not in an appendix)

## 8. Copyright & permissions

- Permission letters from copyright owner have been submitted to format examiner for any material that requires permission.

## 9. Compliance with university research regulations.

- Approval has been secured from the Research Office for any research involving human subjects, animals, or certain hazardous substances (IRB, IACUC, IBC).

## 10. Diagrams, photos, and other illustrations

- Photos/illustrations/lettering/drawing all professional quality.  All copies have identical photos or illustrations.

- All printed on same paper required for the final copy; no adhesive tape or glue.

**11. Oversized or unusual materials (for example, maps or CDs)**

- Any such material is identical for all copies, and is prepared in accordance with individual instructions from the format examiner to meet Milner Library requirements for shelving and archiving.

---

**Additional format requirements from departmental style manual**

**For theses from single approval departments**, departmental manual requirements are checked by the Graduate School format examiner.

- In addition to meeting university requirements, illustrative materials meet departmental manual requirements.
- Format of each heading level follows departmental manual requirements and is consistent throughout.
- Parenthetical, footnote or endnote references follow departmental manual requirements.
- Formats of tables, figures, schemes, taxonomies follow departmental manual requirements and are consistent throughout.
- White space around titles, headings, page numbers, illustrative materials, etc. follows departmental manual requirements and is consistent throughout.
- All other departmental manual requirements have been followed.

---

**For theses from dual approval departments**, all items other than university-wide requirements are checked by the department format authority, who signs the approval form that must accompany the copies of the thesis. The Graduate School format examiner does not check departmental requirements.

---

**Review all university and department requirements and make corrections as needed.**

**All items identified for correction in the pre-defense format check must also be corrected in the final copies.**

**If the final copies do not meet requirements you will need to correct and reprint, and your graduation date may be delayed if those changes cannot be completed by the Graduate School deadline.**

Revised June 2008

**Following are sample pages (common pages only -- samples of less commonly needed pages such as landscape format for charts and graphs are posted in the thesis section of the Graduate School web site)**

NOTE: Sample pages are reproduced on both sides of the page in this guide. In your thesis, all pages must be single-sided.

See the Thesis section of the Graduate School web site for additional tips on meeting format requirements.

2" top margin  
1.5" left margin; 1" right margin  
1" bottom margin  
no page number

THE TITLE APPEARS IN AN INVERTED PYRAMID STYLE  
IN ALL UPPERCASE LETTERS  
AND DOUBLE-SPACED

[Two double spaces]

John H. Doe

[One double space]

104 Pages

December 2008

[One double space]

The annotation objectively summarizes the thesis in no more than thirty words and must be signed by the committee members. The date above is the date of graduation, not the date when the work is deposited in the Graduate School. The date accompanying the signatures is the date on which the members meet to approve the work as correct and complete.

*The Signature block should be as close to the 1" bottom margin as possible. Your department chair or school director may waive the signatures on the Annotation. If you receive a waiver, omit the entire signature block.*

APPROVED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date          James B. Smith, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date          Mary C. Jones

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date          Thomas R. Brown





2" top margin  
1.5" left margin; 1" right margin  
1" bottom margin  
no page number

THE TITLE APPEARS IN AN INVERTED PYRAMID STYLE  
IN ALL UPPERCASE LETTERS  
AND DOUBLE-SPACED

**Two or three double spaces between title and author's name.**

JOHN H. DOE

*Center text on this page between the 1.5" left and 1" right margins, not to the edges of the paper.*

*In bottom information block, single-space first three lines of text; double-space last four lines of text.*

*Keep whole information block as close to the 1" bottom margin as possible.*

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

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Chemistry

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

2008

*(Sample Copyright page)*

*2" top margin  
1.5" left margin; 1" right margin  
no page number*

© 2008 John H. Doe

[OR]

Copyright 2008 John H. Doe

*This page is optional.*

*The copyright line should begin on the 2" top margin and be centered between 1.5" left and 1" right margins.*

*For more information about the copyrighting process, see the Guide for Writers of Master's Theses.*

2" top margin  
1.5" left margin; 1" right margin  
1" bottom margin  
no page number

THE TITLE APPEARS IN AN INVERTED PYRAMID STYLE  
IN ALL UPPERCASE LETTERS  
AND DOUBLE-SPACED

Two or three double spaces between title and author's name.

JOHN H. DOE

*The thesis approval page should be signed by the committee members; the date should be the date that the members meet to certify that the work is correct and complete.  
In all signature blocks, align committee members by their first names.  
Extend signature lines to the "r" in "Chair" (or to the end of the longest name).  
Align THESIS APPROVED with "Date."  
Position whole signature block close to the 1" bottom margin.*

THESIS APPROVED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date            James B. Smith, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date            Mary C. Jones

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date            Thomas R. Brown

2" top margin  
1.5" left margin; 1" right margin  
page number on 1" bottom margin, centered

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to thank.....

The Acknowledgments page is not required. If you wish to dedicate your thesis to one or more persons, you must do so in the Acknowledgments section, not on a separate dedication page. \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

J. H. D.

*Double-space text.*

*The writer's initials should appear one double space below the last line of text near the right margin. Initials should correlate with the author's name on preceding pages and should be typed in all uppercase letters, with punctuation.*

*Place lowercase Roman numeral page number on 1" bottom margin, centered.*

2" top margin on first page  
1.5" left margin; 1" right margin  
page number on 1" bottom margin, centered

## CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	i
CONTENTS	ii
TABLES	iv
FIGURES	v
CHAPTER	
I.    THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND	1
Statement of the Problem	1
Hypotheses	5
Definition of Terms	7
Limitations of the Study	9
Methodology	11
Collection of the Data	13
Analysis of the Data	17
II.   REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	20
General Literature Review	21
Specific Research	21
Similarities of the Theories	22
Differences in Demographics of Studies	23
Cultural Variations and Biases	25
General Themes	27
Resource Development	29
Summary	33
III.  RESEARCH DESIGN	42
Statement of the Problem	43

*1" top margin on secondary pages*

Research Design Procedures	46
Collection of the Data	52
Materials	53
Measurements	55
Assessments	56
Statistical Measures	58
IV. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA	60
Statement of the Problem	61
Hypotheses	64
Statistical Analyses	66
Findings and Results	68
Barriers to Comprehensive Applications	69
Advantages of Generalized Modeling	71
Summary	73
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	75
Summary of the Research Problem, Methods and Findings	75
Conclusions and Implications	77
Recommendations for Future Research	78
REFERENCES	80
APPENDIX A: Survey Questionnaire	84
APPENDIX B: Letter of Introduction and Direction	86
APPENDIX C: Sample Responses from Subjects at Research Site K-112	88

*The above titles and headings are samples only. Titles and headings will vary based upon the subject matter and topic.*

*Chapter titles and headings in text must match verbatim their respective listings in Contents.*

*This includes uppercase and lowercase letters, abbreviations, punctuation, and spacing.*

*Align reference page numbers with the "e" in "Page." See example above.*

*Align chapter Roman numerals by their respective periods.*

2" top margin on first page  
1.5" left margin; 1" right margin  
page number on 1" bottom margin, centered

## TABLES

Table	Page
1. Organization and Location	9
2. Frequency and Percentage of Positive Responses on Returned Questionnaire	63
3. Cross Tabulation of Occupation Cluster	64
4. Cross Tabulation of College Graduates	67
5. Ratings of Human-Relations Skills	69
6. Ratings of Basic Skills	70

*Table titles in text must match verbatim their listings on these pages. This includes uppercase and lowercase letters, abbreviations, and punctuation.*

*Place referenced page numbers across from last line of multi-line table titles.*

*Where these referenced tables appear in the text, maintain triple or quadruple spacing between text and top or bottom of each table.*

*Tables within appendices are not included in the Tables listing. (Tables in appendices are numbered "A-1", "A-2", "B-1", "B-2", "C-1", "C-2", etc.)*

2" top margin on first page  
1.5" left margin; 1" right margin  
page number on 1" bottom margin

## FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Chart of Sales and Percentages for Product Item	3
2. Begin Secondary Lines of Multi-Line Figure Titles Even with Beginning Point of Introductory Lines	10
3. Place Referenced Page Number Across from Last Line of Multi-Line Figure Titles	21

*Figure titles in text must match verbatim their listings on Figures page. This includes uppercase and lowercase letters, abbreviations, and punctuation. Place referenced page numbers across from last line of multi-line figure titles. Where actual figures appear in text, maintain triple or quadruple spacing between figure and surrounding text. Figures within appendices are not included in the Figures listing.*







2" top margin on coversheet or first page  
1.5" left margin; 1" right margin  
page number on 1" bottom margin, centered

## APPENDIX A

TYPE THE DESCRIPTIVE TITLE IN ALL UPPERCASE LETTERS,  
DOUBLE SPACED, IN INVERTED PYRAMID FORMAT

*Use a 2" top margin on each cover sheet or the first page of each appendix.*

*If not using a cover sheet, use a 2" top margin on the first page of the appendix.*

*On each introductory page, place page number on 1" bottom margin, centered between 1.5" left and 1" right margins.*

*On each secondary page, place page number on the 1" top and 1" right margin.*

*On each cover sheet or the first page of each appendix, type the appendix title in all uppercase letters, one double space below "APPENDIX A," using inverted pyramid format for multi-line titles.*

*If using cover sheets for appendices, use a separate cover sheet for each appendix.*

*If there is only one appendix, an alpha designation is not required.*

*When using a cover sheet with each appendix, there are two options from which to choose for the first page following each coversheet:*

- 1. Use 2" top margin on first page following cover sheet, repeat APPENDIX A and title, center page number on bottom margin.*

*All secondary pages will have page numbers on 1" top and 1" right margins, with first line of text beginning one double space below page number.*

*OR*

- 2. On first page following cover sheet, do not repeat APPENDIX A and title, begin text or illustration one double space below the page number, which is located in the upper right corner.*