



OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING THESES AND DISSERTATIONS

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Overview of the Thesis and Dissertation Manual

This manual provides guidelines for the processes and procedures graduate students are to follow to complete their master's thesis or doctoral thesis or dissertation. The manual includes Towson University requirements related to:

- Section I - The Purpose of Theses and Dissertations
- Section II - Roles and Responsibilities of The Student, Thesis/Dissertation Chairperson and Committee Members
- Section III - Thesis and Dissertation Preparation
- Section IV - Manuscript Formatting, Typing, Printing and Organization Requirements
- Section V - Disciplinary Style
- Section VI - Electronic Dissemination

These guidelines are consistent with the policies of Towson University. Students also are to confer with their thesis or dissertation chairperson for the requirements of their graduate program and academic discipline that are in addition to those described in this manual.

Some graduate programs require students to complete other written projects for which portions of these guidelines may apply. Students are to confer with their project advisor regarding requirements. Other programs may not require a major written project, but rather additional coursework, internships, recitals, performances and exhibitions for completion of the graduate degree.

Although it is helpful to review published theses or dissertations for content, graduate students should not use the published works as a guide for their manuscript preparation. Professional association guidelines for thesis and dissertation manuscript preparation such as those published by the American Psychological Association (APA) and the Modern Language Association (MLA) are modified periodically. Therefore, it is imperative that students be very familiar with and adhere to *current* rules and requirements as stipulated in this manual and those required by their specific discipline.

Students should read this manual and discipline-specific guidelines thoroughly and completely, follow directions, and ask questions if they are in doubt about specific procedures, rules and manuscript requirements. Students are to seek guidance from their committee chairperson and committee members regarding manuscript requirements. Students also may contact the Office of Graduate Studies for additional guidance.

SECTION I: Purpose of Theses and Dissertations

Typically, the research work for a master's degree is referred to as a *thesis* and the work for a doctorate is referred to as a *dissertation* in this manual. Because the Doctor of Audiology is a clinical doctorate, the research work associated with it is considered a *thesis*, as determined by the Department of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology.

Master's and doctoral theses contribute to the field of knowledge of the student's discipline even if the basic idea for the research is an expansion of existing research. In the thesis, the student must demonstrate the ability to clearly define a worthwhile problem, conduct a thorough investigation, organize and logically present data, and draw defensible conclusions. In the visual and performing arts, the thesis may take the form of recitals, performances, concerts, art exhibitions, compositions, or other creative endeavors.

Originality is expected, though replication studies or follow-up research studies are acceptable at the master's level. The doctoral dissertation represents a more substantial and scholarly project than the thesis. In addition to satisfying the criteria for the thesis, the dissertation also is to reflect original research, adhere to scholarly rigor of the doctoral student's discipline, and provide a positive contribution to society or the discipline.

The Towson University guidelines for theses and dissertations described in the following sections are minimum expectations. Individual departments and graduate programs may specify additional policies and guidelines that are more rigorous as to the scope and level of work necessary to complete the thesis or dissertation.

Eligibility to Initiate the Dissertation

Prior to initiating the dissertation, students are to (a) satisfy all of their doctoral program's prerequisite requirements, (b) demonstrate knowledge of research methods commensurate with common research practices of their discipline and the research focus of their dissertation, (c) demonstrate the ability to write in a scholarly manner consistent with the expectations of their discipline and (d) fulfill their program's requirements for advancement to candidacy.

Examples of program prerequisites include the completion of designated courses and projects, currency in discipline's licensure and certification requirements and presentation of scholarly work at a conference or in a professional journal. Demonstration of knowledge of research methods includes successful completion of graduate coursework related to research and active participation in research projects. Demonstration of scholarly writing may be accomplished through submission of written course assignments, comprehensive assessments, journal articles or other forms of program approved written work. Characteristics of scholarly writing include adherence to English rules of grammar, sentence and paragraph structure; logical and integrated organization of ideas; critical analysis and synthesis of theories, concepts and data; and substantiation of conclusions with evidence. Students who struggle with scholarly writing are to seek professional assistance with writing and demonstrate competency to the program's graduate committee to advance to candidacy. Examples of requirements for advancement to candidacy include successful completion of oral and written examinations and assessments, completion of a project and scholarly report and submission of an article(s) to a juried journal.

The purpose of the candidacy is for the student to demonstrate broad scholarly knowledge of the discipline and specific scholarly knowledge related to the dissertation. The student is permitted a maximum of three attempts to satisfy candidacy requirements. After three unsuccessful attempts, the student will be terminated from the doctoral program.

Program Responsibilities Related to the Dissertation Process

Programs are to have established procedures for evaluating the student's eligibility for candidacy that include a review by a committee and an appeal process. The review committee is to be comprised of at least two faculty members who hold graduate faculty status and who have current expertise related to the candidacy requirements. One member may be the student's potential dissertation chairperson. The student appeal process is to include steps consistent with the academic appeal procedures for course assignments, program dismissal and academic integrity outlined in the Towson University Graduate Catalog.

Doctoral programs and departments may have policies and procedures regarding advancement to candidacy and eligibility to initiate the dissertations that are more rigorous than those of the University. In such situations, students are to abide by both sets of policies and procedures. Printed or electronic copies of these policies and procedures are to be available to the doctoral students.

SECTION II: Roles and Responsibilities

Student

Graduate students bear primary responsibility for their thesis or dissertation from the inception of the idea through the preparation of the final document. They are to maintain ongoing contact with their thesis/dissertation chairperson and committee members and adhere to established expectations and guidelines throughout each step of the process.

Students are exclusively responsible for the substantive content of their thesis or dissertation. Although they may seek guidance from their committee chairperson and committee members for assistance with requirements established for any sponsored research, students are primarily responsible for completing the required IRB training and understanding and abiding by requirements for ethical research. If in doubt, students also should consult with the Office of Sponsored Programs and Research at 410-704-2236; ospr@towson.edu; <https://www.towson.edu/academics/research/sponsored/index.html>. Students also are responsible for thoroughly proofreading all submitted copies and for correcting all content and writing errors, including typographic, formatting, spelling, grammar, and syntax errors. Some academic programs allow students to procure the services of an editor to assist with writing and correcting writing errors. The [Writing Center](#) is available to assist students with many aspects of their document preparation. Students are to submit a copy of their final thesis or dissertation to the committee chairperson and committee members for approval. The committee chairperson and committee members are responsible for determining whether the finished version meets required standards of the discipline for research methods, content and writing style. Once approved, the student is to submit the thesis or dissertation to the Office of Graduate Studies for final approval.

Thesis or Dissertation Committee Chairperson–Advisor

In most graduate programs at Towson University, one faculty member assumes the joint responsibilities of the thesis or dissertation committee chairperson and advisor. In some programs, two faculty members share the responsibilities. In such situations, one faculty member may serve as the committee chairperson and assume primary responsibility for administrative aspects of the thesis or dissertation process. The other faculty member may serve as the thesis/dissertation advisor and assume primary responsibility for advising the scholarly aspects of the thesis or dissertation process. In this document, the phrase chairperson-advisor is used to denote the overall responsibilities either assumed by one faculty member or shared by two faculty members. Program specific delineation of chairperson and advisor responsibilities are to be outlined in the program's thesis or dissertation guidelines.

The thesis or dissertation chairperson-advisor assumes major responsibility for working directly with the student throughout all phases of the thesis or dissertation. The chairperson-advisor must hold appointment as a full graduate faculty member, have earned a doctoral or terminal degree that is equivalent to or higher than the degree the student is seeking, and demonstrate current expertise related to the student's thesis or dissertation topic.

Appointment as full graduate faculty is based on evidence of the faculty member's continued active research, professional productivity and designation as a full time tenured or tenure track assistant, associate or full professor at Towson University.

Though the student may request a particular faculty member to serve as thesis or dissertation chairperson-advisor, the program director, department chair and Dean of Graduate Studies must approve the appointment.

Other teaching, advising, scholarship and service responsibilities limit the number of theses or dissertations a faculty member can chair or advise in an academic year; the number requires the approval by the department chair and dean of the academic college as part of the faculty member's annual workload agreement. Approval of and changes to the chairperson-advisor position must be granted by the program director, department chairperson and the Dean of Graduate Studies. Students who request a change in their chairperson-advisor must do so in writing and provide rationale and documentation to substantiate the request.

The documentation is to include evidence of addressing issues of concern with the thesis or chairperson-advisor that led to the request, if relevant. Approval first must be obtained by the program director, then the department chairperson, then the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Programs also may require approval by or consultation with their committee. Any request for change in chairperson-advisor may impact the timeline and delay completing the comprehensive assessment, thesis or dissertation.

Chairpersons-advisors who retire from Towson University prior to the student's completion of the thesis/dissertation may continue to serve in that role for a maximum of three years, if they:

- Hold full graduate faculty status at the time of retirement.
- Demonstrate continued active research/professional productivity during retirement.
- Are requested by the student to continue to serve in that role.
- Receive approval from the program director, department chairperson, and Dean of Graduate Studies.

Alternatively, chairpersons-advisors who retire or resign from Towson University prior to the student's completion of the thesis/dissertation may serve as a thesis/ dissertation committee member if they:

- Meet the criteria for committee membership as stated below.
- Are requested by the student to serve in that role.
- Receive approval from the program director/department chairperson and Dean of Graduate Studies.

The chairperson-advisor is the student's main consultant, advisor and advocate, and is to hold regularly scheduled meetings with the student throughout the thesis/dissertation process. The chairperson counsels the student regarding the potential membership of the thesis/dissertation committee with the goal of maximizing available faculty expertise related to the research question. It is incumbent on the student and the chairperson-advisor to assure that all content and methodological expertise needed for the research is present among the thesis/dissertation committee members.

The chairperson-advisor challenges the student to anticipate theoretical, practical and methodological complications that are likely to be encountered. The chairperson-advisor guides the student through the analysis of the research topic and research questions to determine ways of addressing theoretical and methodological problems. The student is expected to submit drafts of the research proposal and the developing manuscript on a regular basis to the chairperson-advisor for feedback and approval. The chairperson-advisor is expected to provide timely and specific feedback

on the drafts. Students and chairpersons-advisors are to discuss and agree upon expectations for timely submission of and feedback on drafts. The quality of the research is a direct reflection of standards established by the discipline and enforced by the chairperson-advisor. When meeting with another member of the thesis/dissertation committee, the student is to include the chairperson-advisor, or is to discuss the results of the meeting with the chairperson-advisor soon afterwards. This procedure will protect the student from inconsistent guidance and incompatible recommendations. If the student receives contradictory information, the chairperson-advisor is to take steps to resolve the inconsistencies and assumes responsibility for the final decision.

The chairperson-advisor conducts the proposal and defense meetings. The chairperson-advisor may identify a thesis/dissertation committee member or other designated faculty member to oversee the defense process to assure it is consistent with Department/College/University requirements. The chairperson-advisor is to check the department's/program's expectations and procedures for the defense of thesis and dissertation and make sure all procedures are followed by the committee members and the student.

General expectations and procedures are to be discussed with the student prior to a defense meeting. Typically, the student is asked to present the contents of the written proposal, thesis or dissertation to the committee, followed by questions from committee members. Although defense meetings typically are open to the campus community, the committee chairperson-advisor or other designated faculty member should make it clear at the outset of the meeting if and when questions to the candidate will be accepted from the audience. The student is to obtain special permission from the committee chairperson-advisor, the program director or department chairperson and the Dean of Graduate Studies for a closed proposal or thesis/dissertation defense.

In some cases, a graduate student's research work may contain information that may be identified as proprietary in nature or relevant to patent applications. This information will be made available to committee members only and discussed in the defense meeting as part of a closed session between the candidate and the committee. When the discussion moves to other aspects of the project, the meeting will be re-opened to the campus community. The committee chairperson-advisor, in consultation with relevant committee members and the student are responsible for determining if some portion of the defense discussion should be closed. The chairperson-advisor also is responsible for overseeing this process during the defense meeting.

Proposal defense and thesis/dissertation defense meetings are to exemplify the highest level of professional and ethical conduct at all times. For doctoral students, completion of the dissertation reflects the highest scholarly achievement.

Thesis and Dissertation Committee Members

Thesis/Dissertation Committee members are responsible for thorough review of the research document. At least two committee members in addition to the chairperson are required for the thesis committee. At least three committee members in addition to the chairperson are required for the dissertation committee. At least one dissertation committee member is to be external to the student's program of study. Up to two members of a thesis committee may be external to the student's program of study.

This committee member can be a faculty member in another department of the University or can be an expert who is external to the University. Other committee members may be added by the student and the chairperson for their content or methodological assistance. Usually, a committee will have no more than six members.

All members of the committee must hold appointment as full or associate graduate faculty and possess expertise related to an aspect of the thesis/dissertation topic or research methodology.

Appointment as graduate faculty is based on evidence of the faculty member's continued active research and professional productivity.

Approval of and changes to the committee membership must be granted by the program director, department chairperson and the Dean of Graduate Studies. A committee member who retires or resigns from Towson University prior to the completion of the thesis or dissertation may continue to serve on the committee if:

- requested by the student to do so; and
- receives approval from the program director, the department chairperson and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

If the program requires that at least one committee member in addition to the chairperson be a member of the program or the University, then another faculty member needs to be appointed to replace the faculty member who retired or resigned.

Each committee member is to be fully familiar with the content of the proposal, thesis or dissertation prior to the defense meeting and be prepared to discuss the research and any related concerns during the defense. When asked to be a member of a student's thesis or dissertation committee, the faculty member should inquire into the student's and the chairperson's expectations. The committee member should be willing to provide the student with the necessary time and support.

Committee members are to resolve conflicts of values and professional opinions, theoretical and methodological differences directly with one another prior to the proposal or thesis/dissertation defense so that the student has clear guidelines as to what is expected. If the committee members cannot do so, the committee chairperson is to intercede. The chairperson also may seek approval from the program director and department chair to have the committee member step down from the committee.

Authorship

Students are the sole authors of the theses or dissertations that they submit to Towson University in partial fulfillment of the criteria of their degree requirements. As owners of the copyright to their thesis or dissertation, students may place a temporary or permanent embargo on electronic access to their work through ProQuest. Thesis and dissertation chairs, advisors, or committee members also may place a temporary embargo, if the content of the thesis or dissertation contains their potentially patented work (See section on Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD) in the Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines for additional details). Ownership of the data gathered as part of the thesis or dissertation is to abide by Towson University Policy on Intellectual Property and the standards of the student's discipline.

Thesis and dissertation chairs, advisors and committee members are not to be included as authors of the thesis or dissertation. Their roles are to guide the thesis or dissertation process and to provide formative and summative feedback to the students regarding their demonstrated ability to fulfill the requirements of the thesis or dissertation.

Students are encouraged to meet with their thesis or dissertation chair, advisor and committee members early in the thesis or dissertation process to discuss authorship of potential publications

resulting from their thesis or dissertation. Students may bring concerns regarding authorship guidelines and expectations to the Graduate Studies Committee. Authorship on publications that result from the student's thesis or dissertation are to abide by the standards of the student's discipline and the publisher guidelines. Authorship on such publications implies substantive contribution to the scholarship and writing of the final product. The order of authors on publications resulting from the thesis or dissertation is to abide by the standards of the discipline.

Academic Integrity

Students are to abide by the Academic Integrity Policy of Towson University and the code of conduct of their discipline throughout the thesis or dissertation process. Students whose thesis or dissertation contains plagiarized, falsified, or fabricated work are subject to the policies, procedures, and sanctions outlined in the Academic Integrity Policy, including potential expulsion from the University, if still a student. The University reserves the right to revoke the awarded master's or doctoral degree of those students who, after graduating, are found to have violated the Academic Integrity Policy during the thesis or dissertation process.

SECTION III: Preparing the Thesis or Dissertation

Procedural Steps

The process begins with the student requesting a faculty member to serve as thesis/dissertation chairperson. The student is to abide by the academic program or department policies regarding procedures for determining which faculty member will serve as a thesis or dissertation chairperson. (See Section II: Roles and Responsibilities in this manual for more information on determining the thesis/dissertation chairperson).

The chairperson and the student then meet to discuss the focus of the research and identify additional committee expertise needed to assist the student in completing the thesis/dissertation. The student is to abide by the academic program or department policies regarding procedures for determining the thesis or dissertation committee members. (See Section II: Roles and Responsibilities in this manual for more information on determining the composition of the Thesis or Dissertation Committee.)

The student next completes the [*Thesis/Dissertation Committee Approval Form*](#), which is then routed to acquire the necessary signatures from committee members and the Office of Graduate Studies for approval before formally initiating the thesis/dissertation [See [Appendix A](#) for forms]. The Dean of Graduate Studies verifies that all committee members hold graduate faculty status and meet the qualifications for serving on a thesis/dissertation committee, then signs and forwards a copy of the form to the program director and committee chairperson.

The student then obtains a permission from the graduate program director or department chairperson to register for the thesis or dissertation course. The student is to abide by the academic program and department policies and procedures for the number of thesis or dissertation credits to register in each fall, spring, minimester and/or summer term. Students should always consult with their thesis/dissertation chairperson regarding which academic term(s) to register for thesis/dissertation units and the number of units to take.

The student next develops the thesis/dissertation proposal. The student is to maintain ongoing contact with the thesis/dissertation chairperson and the committee members during the development of the proposal and to abide by the academic program or department guidelines for its content and scope. Some programs and departments require a formal oral defense of a thesis proposal, though this is not a requirement of the Office of Graduate Studies. Doctoral dissertation proposals require a formal oral defense. Approval of the thesis or dissertation proposal by the chairperson and committee members is necessary for the student to proceed with the thesis or dissertation research. The student is to confer with and receive approval from the chairperson and the committee members for a proposed timeframe for completing the thesis or dissertation. The Dean of Graduate Studies does not need to approve the thesis or dissertation proposal.

The student must seek and obtain written approval from the Towson University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects prior to conducting research that involves the use of human subjects. Students must seek and obtain approval from the Towson University Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) prior to conducting research that involves the use of animals. Students can contact the Office of Sponsored Programs and Research at (410)704-2236 or at ospr@towson.edu.

Guidelines and applications for approval of research involving human subjects and animals are available at <https://www.towson.edu/academics/research/sponsored/comply/>. Students are to allow ample time for submission to and review by IRB or IACUC of their research proposal.

Depending on the type of research, the IRB or IACUC review process may take from one to many months. IRB and IACUC approval also may be required by external institutions for those research projects involving other agencies and institutions. Students are to include a copy of the Towson and external IRB or IACUC approval form as an appendix to their thesis/dissertation.

Once granted approval to implement the thesis or dissertation research, the student is to meet regularly with the committee chairperson and committee. During these meetings, the student is to discuss the progress of and findings from the research, review written drafts of the thesis/dissertation and assess the progress toward completion of all thesis/dissertation requirements. The student typically needs to submit multiple drafts of the thesis/dissertation to the chairperson and the committee members for review and feedback prior to the final draft.

Students are to abide by all deadlines established by the Office of Graduate Studies for review and submission of the final thesis/dissertation and by the Towson University Graduation Office for formal submission of an intention to graduate [See [Appendix D](#)]. Students are to abide by department and program deadlines for review and submission of the thesis/dissertation, if these deadlines are earlier than those stated by the Office of Graduate Studies.

- Once it is approved by the committee chairperson, the student is to distribute the final draft of the thesis or dissertation to the committee members for review at least seven weeks prior to the official end of the academic term (final exam week) in which the student intends to graduate. At the time of distribution, the student is to meet with the committee chairperson to establish a date and time for the oral defense of the thesis/dissertation. **The oral defense is to occur at least four weeks before the end of the academic term.**
- The student may announce the date and time of the defense to the University community at least one week prior to the event. The administrative assistant to the dean of the student's program or college can assist in posting defense announcements. Thesis and dissertation defenses are open to all members of the Towson University academic community, and to guests invited by the student. The student is to obtain special permission from the committee chairperson and the program director or department chairperson for a closed thesis and dissertation defense.
- Within two days following a successful defense, the student should meet with the committee chairperson to discuss necessary modifications specified by the committee during the oral defense.
- The student is to make necessary modifications to the thesis/dissertation and submit it to the committee chairperson for final review. The student is to submit the revised thesis/dissertation to the committee chairperson and committee members at least 15 working days before the last day of the term. This will allow the chairperson and committee members 5 working days for final check of content, formatting, typing and page numbering prior to the last possible day the student must submit all materials to the Office of Graduate Studies. A student who exceeds these deadlines or whose work continues to require additional revisions may need to postpone graduation to the following academic term.
- The student is to submit the final approved thesis/dissertation, signed approval form, and the [Internet Release Form](#) in electronic form to the Office of Graduate Studies at gradformat@towson.edu at least 10 working days prior to the official end of the term in which the student intends to graduate. **The electronic copy of the thesis/dissertation is to**

be in a version compatible with Microsoft Word; the electronic copy should not be a PDF at this time unless it was prepared in LaTeX/Overleaf. The Office of Graduate Studies evaluates an electronic copy of thesis/dissertation after it has been approved by the committee to ensure compliance with the procedural and formatting requirements stipulated in this manual. Theses or dissertations that do not follow the guidelines will need to be corrected by the student before receiving final approval from the Office of Graduate Studies.

- Once the thesis/dissertation is approved, the student is to send an electronic Word version that includes the approval form, the IRB approval forms, the consent and assent forms, the internet release form, and the research questions and CV to the Office of Graduate Studies. The Office of Graduate Studies will forward the electronic copy to Cook Library [See Section VI for more details]. Students are welcome to produce paper copies and have them bound for themselves, their committee chairperson, committee members and others. Neither the Office of Graduate Studies nor Cook Library requires a hard bound copy.
- Even though paper copies are not being submitted, the formatting requirements of a paper copy must be followed. Doctoral students also may contact *ProQuest* to have their dissertations submitted to University Microfilm Incorporated, a database of nearly all dissertations from American universities.

Students are expected to maintain continuous registration in a thesis/dissertation course (or continuum) each academic term (spring, fall) until they successfully complete all of the requirements of the thesis/dissertation. If the student is completing their thesis/dissertation for summer graduation, they are expected to be registered for the summer session in which they complete their requirements.

If the thesis or dissertation is not completed in the term(s) for which all required units have been earned, the student must register and pay for one unit of 899 Thesis Continuum or 999 Dissertation Continuum each proceeding fall or spring term until it is completed. A grade of in-progress (IP) is entered for the thesis or dissertation coursework until the thesis or dissertation is completed. Students are to consult with their committee chairperson to determine if and when they should register for Continuum units. Continuum courses do not count towards credits needed for graduation. Continuum courses are graded as satisfactory (S) or unsatisfactory (U) at the ***end of each semester taken***. A grade of S or U in continuum is given based on whether the student made satisfactory progress on the thesis or dissertation in that given term – the grade of S in continuum does not indicate that the thesis or dissertation is complete. ([Appendix C](#))

In-progress (IP) grades are not given for continuum courses. Once the student has completed all requirements for the thesis or dissertation, the thesis or dissertation chair submits a grade of satisfactory (S) for the thesis or dissertation course.

Students also must abide by the time limit for degree completion of their graduate program. This time limit includes all coursework, transfer courses and thesis/dissertation completion (defense inclusive). Terminal master's degrees (MFA) and doctoral programs have a ten-year time limit. All other graduate programs have a seven-year time limit. Students should review the Graduate Program Handbook and consult with their committee chairperson to identify which time limit applies to their program.

Publishing with ProQuest

Towson University supports doctoral students publishing their thesis/ dissertation through ProQuest UMI as it allows international dissemination. This is in addition to the dissemination of the thesis/dissertation that occurs through Cook Library. Towson has an account that students can use to submit dissertations for free. Students also can pay additional fees for such options as copyright protection. Students procure these additional options.

ProQuest/UMI Dissertation Publishing is the world's only comprehensive service for publishing, archiving and disseminating graduate research. Publishing with ProQuest/UMI ensures that the dissertation or thesis gains the widest possible audience.

The UMI ETD Administrator system helps manage the electronic submission of dissertations and theses that the university plans to publish with ProQuest. It simplifies the submission process for students and graduate administrators alike by moving all steps online and eliminating the need to box and ship paper copies of each dissertation or thesis.

To access Towson's account to ProQuest UMI, please click on the link below. It provides information as to how to submit your dissertation through Towson University. The word or pdf version you submitted to Graduate Studies and to Cook Library should contain all the information you need to submit your document to ProQuest UMI. <https://secure.etdadmin.com/cgi-bin/main/resources>

SECTION IV: Formatting the Manuscript and Arrangement of Pages

Manuscript Preparation

The general format requirements presented in this manual supersede all other requirements stipulated in previous editions of Towson University manuals. Students are to refer to the style manual preferred by the academic department or program for matters not specified in this manual. Some programs/departments may prefer that students follow a format and style required by the journal, monograph, book or other type of publication where they will submit their thesis or dissertation for publication.

Students are to consult with their committee chairperson regarding the appropriate format and style to follow and are to use it consistently throughout the manuscript. Students are to inform the Office of Graduate Studies of any changes from the standard format and the reasons for such changes.

Formatting Templates

Microsoft Word and Overleaf/LaTeX templates are available for several different styles. If no templates are available for your academic discipline, you may use the APA template and adapt it according to any discipline-specific guidelines.

- [Microsoft Word – APA \(.docx\)](#)
- [Microsoft Word – Chicago \(.docx\)](#)
- [Microsoft Word – IEEE \(.docx\)](#)
- [LaTeX/Overleaf](#)

Type and Fonts

Because it is possible that the manuscripts will be reduced to microfilm or other small versions, type and fonts must be large enough and clear enough to retain their integrity during the reduction process. Typeface and font size should be uniform throughout the document. Students should use a serif type face and 12-point font. Times Roman typeface size is preferred in APA publications. A sans serif typeface may be used for figures. Compressed typeface should not be used.

As much as possible, students are to use word processing techniques for any special symbols, lines, boxes, or other printing. Students are required to use black colored font unless there is a particular justification for using colored font.

Margins

Students are to use consistent margins throughout the manuscript. The margins throughout the entire manuscript should be as follows:

Left: 1.5"	Top: 1"
Right: 1"	Bottom: 1"

Students are to adjust the text so as not to leave less than two isolated lines at the top of a new page or above the bottom margin except for the final page of a chapter, a table, or an illustration. All headings must be followed by at least two lines of text at the bottom of the page.

Page Numbers and Numbering Preliminary Pages

(See Arrangement of the Thesis and Dissertation below). Preliminary pages should be arranged in the following sequence using **lowercase Roman numerals** (i, ii, iii, iv, etc.) centered above the bottom margin. Count the title page as page one but do not print a page number.

- Title page
- Approval page
- Acknowledgement page (optional)
- Abstract page
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables and number and the title of the tables (if two or more tables are included)
- List of Figures and the numbers and titles of the figures (if two or more figures are included)

Text. Beginning with the first page of the text and continuing to the end of the manuscript number pages in sequence with **Arabic numerals**, starting with 1. Count all pages and number them. Do not insert numbers such as "106a" or leave uncounted pages.

Position page numbers uniformly at the top of the page, flush with the right margin. Some style manuals also require students to use a running head. Students are to consult with their thesis/dissertation chairperson regarding the use of a running head.

Even if a page has text/table/graph/diagram filling the page and printed sideways (for landscape orientation), the page number should still be in the same position and alignment as on a regular page. This may require manually typing or positioning the page number. It may be necessary to scan any unusual page to insert it into the electronic text.

Line Spacing. Double-space the heading and main body of the text. Double-space, not quadruple-space, between main headings and subheadings and between headings or subheadings and text. Single-space within footnotes and endnotes.

Headings and Subheadings

- Format headings and subheadings consistently throughout the manuscript.
- Arrange centered headings that are over 3½ inches long in inverted pyramids with the longest line at the top.
- Do not hyphenate words at the ends of lines.
- Use the same font size for headings as used in the body of the text.
- Place chapter titles below chapter numbers.
- Chapters or main content headings should start on a new page.
- Double space, not quadruple space, after the last line of the title before beginning the text.
- Double space between all heading and subheading levels.
- Headings should precede their content, so make sure headings and subheadings alone at the bottom of a page are moved to the next page.
- Some style manuals give specific instructions for headings; others give none. In the latter case, useful guidelines can be found in Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*.

Tables and Figures

- Number all tables and figures with Arabic numerals in the order in which they are first mentioned in text, regardless of whether a more detailed discussion of the table or figure occurs later in the paper.
- Use double spacing as appropriate for tables and figures.
- **Place each table and figure on its own page within or at the end of the text.** Label each table and figure by its number and title.
- Make sure tables are not placed in the Appendices.

References Cited in the Text

- Arrange notes or other methods of reference citation in a definite and consistent order and style according to the discipline style approved by the academic program/department. If unsure, consult the thesis/dissertation chairperson.
- Place footnotes at the bottom of the page within the designated margins. Footnotes should be separated from the text with a horizontal line 2 inches long. Allow sufficient space during typing so that an entire footnote can be placed on the page on which it begins. Word processing programs like Microsoft Word automatically perform this function.
- Endnotes should be placed at the end of each chapter, not at the end of the manuscript. They may be labeled *endnotes*, *chapter notes* or simply *notes*. Begin them at the top margin of a new page with a heading typed in the same manner as other subheadings in the manuscript.
- Whether using footnotes or endnotes, single-space the notes themselves and double-space between them.

Arrangement of the Thesis/Dissertation

Every manuscript is composed of three parts: a) Preliminary Pages, b) Text Pages and c) Supplemental Pages.

Preliminary Pages. The preliminary pages are arranged in the following order and include the title page, approval page, acknowledgement page (optional), abstract and table of contents. The preliminary pages also include the list of tables, list of figures and list of symbols, if applicable. These pages are numbered using lower case Roman Numerals (ii, iii, etc.) that are placed at the bottom center of the page.

Title page. The title page includes the following information. The information is centered and spaced evenly. The title page is not numbered, but is considered page i. A sample of a title page is provided in [Appendix B](#) of this manual.

- Title of the study
- Name of the author
- The phrase "A thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of "MASTER OF ARTS" (or "OF SCIENCE," "OF EDUCATION," as appropriate, or "A dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of "DOCTOR of ..." as appropriate)
- Full name of the department to which it is being submitted
- Name and address of Towson University
- Date of expected graduation (month and year), not the date of the defense

Approval page. The approval page contains the signature of the committee chairperson and the committee member and indicates that the thesis/dissertation meets the standards of the academic program, the department, and the discipline. [See [Appendix B](#) for a sample of the Thesis/Dissertation Approval page].

Acknowledgement page. The acknowledgement page contains a brief statement of appreciation for, or recognition of special assistance, guidance, or support provided to the students during the thesis/dissertation process. The word *Acknowledgments* is centered without punctuation at the top of the page. Text begins two single-spaced lines below this heading and is double-spaced.

Abstract. The abstract should provide the reader with an overview of the problem, methodology and conclusion in concise, specific and informative language. The abstract text for a master's thesis must adhere to a strict 150-word and a one-page limit. Abstracts for doctoral work may be up to 350 words in length and may extend beyond one page. The heading *Abstract* is centered without punctuation at the top of the page. Two lines below this heading the title appears as written on the title page. The author's name is centered and placed two lines below the title. The text of the abstract begins two lines below the author's name and is double-spaced.

Table of contents. Tables of contents may be brief and include only chapter headings or may be detailed and include one or more levels of subheadings. The wordings of headings in the table of contents must correspond exactly to the wording of those headings in the text. No preceding material is listed, but any preliminary pages that follow the Table of Contents should be listed. All items of the main text and supplementary end material should be listed. Each main heading should be left justified. Sub-headings may be indented. Corresponding page numbers should align with the headings and be right justified. The heading *Table of Contents* is centered without punctuation at the top of the page.

List of tables. This section is required if there are two or more tables in the manuscript. The heading *List of Tables* is centered without punctuation at the top of the page. The list of tables uses either the captions exactly as they appear above the tables in the text or the first sentence of lengthy, multi-sentence captions. If the first sentence is used, it must be an informative statement about the subject matter contained in the table. The List of Tables should give a page number on the right side of the page for each item. No tables should be listed in the Appendices.

List of figures. This section is required if there are two or more figures in the manuscript. The heading *List of Figures* is centered without punctuation at the top of the page. The list of figures uses the captions exactly as they appear below the figures or the first sentence of lengthy, multi-sentence captions. If the first sentence is used, it must be an informative statement about the subject matter contained in the figure. The List of Figures should give a page number on the right side of the page for each item.

Keys to symbols, abbreviations, or nomenclature. If used, the layout is up to the discretion of the student in consultation with the thesis/dissertation chairperson. The symbols, abbreviations, and nomenclature are to be consistent with those specified by the academic discipline and style manual.

Text Pages. Page numbering restarts on the first page of texts. Arabic numerals (1, 2, and 3) are used and placed in the upper right corner of the page. Some style manuals require a running head on each page to the left of the page number.

Headings. Theses/dissertations need to be carefully organized to reflect a logical development of the research project. Many, but not all, theses and dissertations are organized into five distinct chapters. Often the major sections of the work are:

- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Methods and Materials
- Results
- Discussion

Also, each chapter or major section may be divided into second, third, fourth, and fifth level sub-headings to emphasize specific aspects of the research. Chapters or major sections are to begin on a new page. Headings and subheadings must always be with their corresponding content, so make sure that any headings and subheadings left alone at the bottom of a page are moved to the next page.

Spacing and indentation of text, series, and block quotations. The text is double-spaced and a new paragraph begins five spaces from the left margin. Use only left-only justified margins. Numbered, lettered or bulleted series are indented from the left margin. Block quotations also are indented from the left margin.

Footnotes and endnotes. The format and style of documentation of sources varies among disciplines. The format/style used also may be one that is required by the journal, monograph, book or other type of publication to which the dissertation/thesis is submitted. Students are to use the chosen format consistently throughout the thesis/dissertation. Even if references are inserted as endnotes, they still must be included in the bibliography at the end of the work. Students should consult with their committee chairperson to identify a style appropriate to be used consistently throughout the manuscript.

Supplemental Pages

Arabic numerals are used to number supplemental pages. The numbering continues from the main text pages. The page number and running head, if applicable, are placed in the upper right corner of the page.

Appendices. Appendices are used for supplementary illustrative materials, such as research or survey instruments, original data, mathematical derivations, computer programs or quotations too lengthy for inclusion in the text or not immediately essential to an understanding of the text. IRB or IACUC approval letters to use human or animal subjects, Informed Consent forms, Informed Assent forms and survey forms used in the research process also are placed in the appendices. Students must include the signed IRB or IACUC, copies of the informed consent/informed assent forms, copies of research questions, surveys and other research forms in the appendices if they were a part of the thesis/dissertation.

Appendices follow the last page of the text. Introduce the appendix with a consecutively numbered page on which the *word Appendix (or Appendices)* is centered without punctuation. Each appendix should be labeled, either at the top or on a proceeding blank page, as Appendix A, Appendix B, etc. The sequence of the appendices follows the order where they were first introduced in the main body of the text. Each appendix needs to be labeled and named in the main body of the text for it to be included in the appendix section.

In the main Table of Contents, include Appendix or Appendices, with the page number of the first page of the appendix section. If there are several appendices, each should be listed and labeled in the Table of Contents, indented, under the listing of Appendices, with its appropriate page number, appendix letter, and title (e.g., Appendix A: IRB Approval). The other option is to prepare a List of Appendices similar to the List of Tables and List of Figures and add List of Appendices to the Table of Contents. This List of Appendices should follow the List of Tables and List of Figures. If you choose to add a List of Appendices, make sure to list all appendices with the letter of appendix and its title (e.g., Appendix A: IRB Approval).

Bibliography (List of References, or Citations, or List of Sources). The last section of the thesis or dissertation is the bibliography. Since nearly all theses and dissertations make use of other works, either in direct quotation or by reference, this section typically is required. The format/style used is to conform to the requirements of the student's academic discipline or the journal, monograph, book or other type of publication where the student intends to publish the work. Each citation listed in the text must be included in the bibliography. The minimum requirements usually are that the referencing system and bibliography be consistent throughout the manuscript, that they are clear and that they fully agree with each other. All work cited in the text must be included in the bibliography. Some word processing systems provide features that assist with formatting of citations and references.

Blank white page. At the end of the thesis/dissertation, there should be one blank white page. This page should not be numbered.

SECTION V: Discipline Styles

A significant aspect of the educational development of many graduate students is to become knowledgeable about the writing style appropriate to their discipline or form of research selected. Therefore, the appropriate writing style and format for the thesis or dissertation is determined by the discipline standards to which the profession subscribes. The organization of the content of a thesis or dissertation should conform to the publication manual or guide most commonly used in the discipline, one that best accommodates the nature of the research and/or the format/style required by the journal, monograph, book or other type of publication to which the student will submit the thesis or dissertation. The chosen format is to be used consistently throughout the document. If a department/program does not stipulate any specific style manual, the students should abide by APA guidelines and use Times New Roman 12. The current edition of any style manual must be used in all cases. The student should consult with the committee chairperson to confirm the writing style to be used. If the style manual differs from these Guidelines, the style of the manual may be followed, but a note to this effect should alert the staff member who will check the format.

Student Formatting Review Checklist

Before submitting your final document to the Graduate Studies for formatting review, check that it abides by all of the following format requirements. Review with your thesis or dissertation chairperson.

Indicate the style manual or publisher guidelines used: _____

Guidelines – General Layout		Yes	No
Type and Font	12-point serif font (including headings) consistent with discipline or specific style format		
	All type must be black		
Margins and paragraphs	Margins: Left 1.5, Right 1.0, Top 1.0, Bottom 1.0		
	At least two sentences in each paragraph		
	Text by itself at the top of a page should contain at least 2 lines of text		
	At least two lines of text in each paragraph that begins at the bottom of a page		
	Minimum of two lines of text following a heading at the bottom of a page		
Page numbers and numbering	Preliminary pages numbered using lower case Roman numerals (ii, iii, iv) at center bottom of page; title page counts as page i but is not numbered		
	Text and supplemental pages numbered using Arabic numbers (1, 2, 3) at top right-hand corner of page; may include running head, justified left		
Line spacing, indentation, block quotes	Double spaced text, including references and between headings and subheadings		
	New paragraphs indented (<i>unless otherwise specified by discipline or specific style format</i>)		
	Numbered, bulleted, or lettered series and block quotations indented from left margin		
Headings, subheadings, and chapter titles	Formatted consistently throughout text according to style manual or publisher guidelines		
	Centered headings and titles over 3.5 inches in length arranged in inverted pyramid		
	Same font style and size as body of text		
	Headings precede content and are not left alone at the bottom of a page		
	Chapters or main content headings start on a new page		
	Chapter title placed two single-spaced lines below chapter number		
Tables and Figures	Tables and figures numbered with Arabic numbers in the order in which they are first mentioned in the text		

	Each table and figure labeled by its number and title		
	Each table and figure on its own page		
	No tables listed in Appendices		
	All tables and figures either imbedded in text OR listed together at end of document or in appendix		
Text citations, footnotes and endnotes	All text citations included in reference list		
	Citation style consistent across citations and with style manual or publisher guidelines		
	Footnotes placed at bottom of page, within designated margins		
	Footnotes separated from text by 2-inch horizontal line		
	Entire footnote on same page where begun		
	Endnotes on separate page at end of each chapter. Page labeled with a heading (e.g., Endnotes, Chapter Notes) in same format as other headings		
Guidelines – Arrangement of Preliminary Pages		Yes	No
Preliminary page arrangement	Pages arranged as follows at the start of the document: title page, copyright (if needed), signed dissertation/thesis approval page, acknowledgement page (optional), abstract, table of contents, list of tables, list of figures, list of appendices (if applicable), list of symbols (if applicable)		
Supplementary page arrangement	Pages arranged as follows at the end of the document: appendices, references, blank page		
Title page	<i>See sample title page at end of checklist</i>		
	Graduation month must be May, August, or December		
	Content placement, bolding, capitalization and spacing match that of the sample title page		
	Considered page i, but no number appears on page		
Copyright	No heading		
Dissertation/thesis approval page	Heading = Dissertation/Thesis Approval Page		
	<i>Insert screenshot/image of DocuSign Dissertation/Thesis Committee Approval Form</i>		
Acknowledgement	Heading = Acknowledgements, centered		
Abstract	Heading = Abstract, centered		
	Thesis/dissertation title centered and placed two lines below Abstract heading		
	Author's name centered and placed 2 single-spaced lines below title		
	Text begins 2 single-spaced lines below author's name		
Table of contents	Heading = Table of Contents, centered; text begins 2 single-spaced lines below heading		

	Contains: List of tables, list of figures, list of symbols (if applicable); chapter headings and subheadings (optional); appendices; list of references		
	Include a list of appendices (with appendix letter and title) and add <i>List of Appendices</i> to the table of contents OR list all appendices on the table of contents with the letter of appendix and its title		
	Table of contents items are left-margin justified; corresponding page numbers are right-margin justified; double spaced; no bolding		
List of tables	Heading = List of Tables, centered; text begins 2 single-spaced lines below heading		
	Table titles listed in order in which they appear in text and left margin justified; corresponding page numbers are right margin justified; double spaced <i>Lengthy table title names can be shortened</i>		
List of figures	Required if document contains 2 or more figures		
	Heading = List of Figures, centered; figure list begins 2 single-spaced lines below heading		
	Figure titles listed in order in which they appear in text and left margin justified; corresponding page numbers are right margin justified; double spaced <i>Lengthy table title names can be shortened</i>		
Keys to symbols, abbreviations, nomenclature (if applicable)	Layout specific to academic discipline and style manual		
Guidelines – Supplemental Pages		Yes	No
Appendices	Each appendix begins on a separate page and labeled Appendix A and title, Appendix B and title, etc.		
	IRB Approval must be included <i>if applicable</i>		
	All IRB supporting documents are included <i>if applicable</i>		
	Appendices in same order as introduced in the main body of text		
List of references	Layout specific to academic discipline and style manual; double spaced		
	Each citation in text included in list of references		
	Formatting consistent with discipline or specific style format		
Blank white page	To follow references; not numbered		

SECTION VI: Electronic Dissemination

ETD Program Statement



Purpose of this Document

This document describes the Library's role in receiving, storing, and providing access to electronic versions of theses and dissertations (ETDs) as part of its digital collections program. It is not intended as a replacement for Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) guidelines for the preparation of theses and dissertations. Students who are preparing a thesis or dissertation should follow the guidelines set forth by the OGS document *Guidelines for preparing theses and dissertations*. Students should not use password protection when submitting PDF versions of their dissertation. Password protection may prevent us from being able to view the document with some future version of the Acrobat PDF reader.

About ETDs

Honors theses, master's theses, and doctoral theses or dissertations prepared by students at Towson University are enduring records of a student's research and findings conducted in partial fulfillment toward an academic degree. Electronic format of theses and dissertations supports the Library's continued efforts to preserve these works while providing authors with ready access to their scholarly work. Through the Library's digital collection of ETDs authors will be able to share stable and perpetually accessible URLs pointing to their work with current or future employees or colleagues, or include them in such documents as resumes, curriculum vitae, or future applications for additional continued education. ETDs are administered through the Library's Special Collections and Archives department (SCA).

Library Workflow for Receipt and Processing of ETDs

The following is an outline detailing the Library workflow for receipt and processing of ETDs following the conclusion of fall, spring, and summer semesters during which theses and dissertations are completed by students at Towson University.

- SCA receives PDF versions of ETDs, signed Thesis/Dissertation Committee Approval Forms, and Internet Release Forms from OGS.
- SCA imports each ETD and its corresponding Committee Approval Form into the Library's digital collection. At this time the full text of the ETD is freely available on the web*.
- SCA notifies the Library's Technical Services department that ETDs are ready for cataloging.
- Technical Services collects descriptive data about each ETD to create a unique catalog record for inclusion in the Library's online catalog. Each record includes the URL pointing to the ETD in the library's digital collection. Technical Services notifies SCA that cataloging is complete.
- SCA creates a duplicate data record to accompany the ETD within the library's digital collection.

*Note: If SCA has not received a signed Internet Release Form from the ETD author the Library will still create a catalog record with a URL that points to the ETD but access to the full text will be restricted to the author or to Library staff for administrative purposes only. The ETD can be made available to the public at any time provided that the author indicates the desire to do so by submitting a signed Internet Release Form to OGS or SCA.

Intellectual Property and Copyright

Copyright protection is granted automatically under current U.S. law to “original works of authorship...fixed in any tangible medium of expression.” Copyright notices (e.g., ©2011 John H. Jones) are *not* required to appear on copies of the work and the copyright does *not* need to be registered with the U.S. Copyright Office for the work to be protected, although there are practical advantages to both notice and registration (for more information, see <https://www.copyright.gov/help/faq/index.html>).

Under the [Towson University Policy on Intellectual Property](#), students retain copyright of their own original work, such as term papers, theses, and dissertations, subject to certain exceptions. The Library *must* receive from the OGS an Internet release form signed by the student. The release form grants Towson University a non-exclusive right to reproduce and distribute the thesis or dissertation and abstract in electronic format; it does *not* transfer any copyright rights in the work, except for the permission described in the release form.

Students who have incorporated the copyrighted work of others into their thesis or dissertation are responsible for ensuring that their use of this material is lawful, whether the material was included under a written grant of permission by the copyright owner or whether the student’s use of the work was covered by one of the statutory limitations on copyright, such as fair use (for more information, see the [Towson University Guidelines for Use of Materials Protected by Copyright](#)).

Open Access

Although copyright law is intended to protect copyrightable works, so that authors can profit from their creativity, academic works are generally measured less by the profit they generate and more by the scholarly impact they have within their field of study. Authors of academic works may benefit more by widespread dissemination of their works without regard to monetary profit.

The Open Access thesis/dissertation submission option provides students with a stable and perpetually accessible means of disseminating their original scholarship. As part of the Library’s digital collections, the thesis or dissertation is assigned a persistent URL, which students can then include on their CV or resume.

Further, since the library’s digital collections are indexed by the major search engines and since they include additional descriptors, like assigned subject headings, for each thesis or dissertation, they are more discoverable than works posted to an author’s personal Web page. Finally, most academic journal and book publishers are now well- accustomed to prior deposit of theses and dissertations in online institutional repositories or digital collections and do not consider this a disqualification to subsequent publication. Note, however, that students who anticipate submitting their work to commercial trade publishers, or those whose thesis consists of creative/expressive work like fiction, poetry, or drama, may instead want to consider the Temporary Embargo option. For more information about the benefits of open access to scholarly research, see <https://sparcopen.org/open-access/>

Embargoes

Although there are many benefits to open access, students may wish to place a temporary embargo on their ETD, thereby restricting access to its content in order to avoid future problems that may arise if they wish to publish their research in a journal or as a book with a publisher. If a student has placed an embargo on their ETD, the Library will make the catalog records available in the catalog and the digital collection while restricting access to the PDF until the embargo has expired.

When submitting ETDs to SCA it is recommended that the Internet Release Form used by OGS make provisions for students to indicate whether or not they desire a temporary embargo which limits access to the ETD for a specific period of time. At the time that a temporary embargo has expired SCA will make the ETD freely available unless an extension is requested in writing by the student.

In keeping with standard practices SCA proposes the following options in relation to embargoes on access to ETDs:

- **Open Access.** No embargo is requested, catalog data and electronic thesis or dissertation is freely available. The student grants to Towson University the non-exclusive right to reproduce and distribute their thesis or dissertation, in whole or in part, and its abstract, in whole or in part, in electronic format over the World Wide Web. In granting this limited permission, the student does not surrender intellectual property rights, except for the non-exclusive limited permission.
- **Temporary Embargo with Limited Access.** An embargo for a specific period of time (such as 1 to 5 years) that allows limited access under certain conditions. Catalog data will be freely available but access to the electronic version is restricted to Cook Library staff members for the purpose of administering or maintaining electronic ETD files, to fulfilling requests for Interlibrary Loan (ILL), or to in-person use within the Special Collections department in the Towson University Albert S. Cook Library.
- **Temporary Embargo.** An embargo for a specific period of time (such as 1 or 5 years), or an embargo set to expire on a specific date.
A temporary embargo can be extended at the written request of the author. Catalog records will be freely available but access to the PDF will be prohibited to anyone other than Cook Library staff members for the purpose of administering or maintaining electronic ETD files or catalog records until the temporary embargo expires. The PDF will not be made available in response to ILL requests unless permission is granted by the author.
- **Permanent Embargo.** An embargo which restricts access to an ETD permanently and indefinitely unless the author requests that the embargo be removed. Catalog records will be freely available but access to the PDF will be prohibited permanently and indefinitely unless the author releases the embargo. The PDF will not be made available in response to ILL requests unless written permission is granted by the author.

APPENDIX A: Forms

Thesis Committee Approval Form Links

Dissertation Committee Approval Form Links

Thesis Approval Form Links

Dissertation Approval Form Links

Internet Release Form Link

Forms for the establishment of your thesis/dissertation committee and for the final approval of your thesis/dissertation by that committee have recently been converted to an online format. The following DocuSign Forms are listed by the number of members serving on your committee. Please use the form that corresponds with your committee size.

To establish your thesis committee, use these forms:

- [Thesis Committee Approval Form for Chair and 2 Members](#)
- [Thesis Committee Approval Form for Chair and 3 Members](#)
- [Thesis Committee Approval Form for Chair and 4 Members](#)

To establish your dissertation committee, use these forms:

- [Dissertation Committee Approval Form for Chair and 3 Members](#)
- [Dissertation Committee Approval Form for Chair and 4 Members](#)

Forms for the establishment of your thesis/dissertation committee and for the final approval of your thesis/dissertation by that committee have recently been converted to an online format. The following DocuSign Forms are listed by the number of members serving on your committee. Please use the form that corresponds with your committee size.

Once you have completed your thesis/ dissertation and are ready for your committee members to approve the final version, please use the following forms:

Thesis Completed Approval Form

[Post- defense Thesis Approval Page Form for Chair and 2 Members](#)

[Post- defense Thesis Approval Page Form for Chair and 3 Members](#)

[Post- defense Thesis Approval Page Form for Chair and 4 Members](#)

Dissertation Completed Approval Form

[Post- defense Dissertation Approval Page Form for Chair and 3 Members](#)

[Post- defense Dissertation Approval Page Form for Chair and 4 Members](#)

Internet Release Form for Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETDs)

[Internet Release Form for ETDs](#)

APPENDIX B: Sample Pages

Thesis Title Page

Dissertation Title Page

Copyright Page (for either Thesis or Dissertation)

**TOWSON UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES (1.0 SPACED AND CENTERED)**

(TITLE OF THESIS TYPED IN CAPITAL LETTERS)

(DOUBLE SPACED AND CENTERED)

by

(Student's Name)

A thesis

Presented to the faculty

of Towson University

in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of (Arts) (Science) (Education)

Department of _____ (1.5 spacing and centered)

Towson University,

Towson, Maryland

21252 (1.5 spacing and centered)

(Month, Year of Graduation)

**TOWSON UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES (1.0 SPACED AND CENTERED)**

(TITLE OF DISSERTATION TYPED IN CAPITAL LETTERS)

(DOUBLE SPACED AND CENTERED)

by

(Student's Name)

A dissertation

Presented to the faculty

of Towson University

in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of (Audiology) (Science) (Education)

Department of _____ (1.5 spacing and centered)

Towson University,

Towson, Maryland

21252 (1.5 spacing and centered)

(Month, Year of Graduation)

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NOTE: This page should only be included in a thesis or dissertation that is to be copyrighted.

APPENDIX C: Administrative Procedures

Projects

In all Departments, the course number 880 (and, if necessary, 881 and 882) is the number for projects. If a student cannot finish the project work in one term, he/she should register for Project Continuum, one credit, with course number 885 in the next term. Usually, 885 should be repeated only with special permission. Setting up courses for projects and project continua is entirely within the department, with course term files like any other courses.

If a project is not completed at the end of the project course, the grade of "IP" (In Progress) will be given. Do not give "I" (Incomplete) since that will automatically change to "F" after one term. At the end of the project work a letter grade is given for the project course and S (satisfactory) for the project continuum.

Theses and Dissertations

Thesis course numbers are department specific and generally fall in the range of 896-898. The student should consult with their advisor and program director for the correct course number and number of credits to enroll in each term following the guidelines in the [Graduate Catalog](#).

Dissertations are numbered 997/998. The number of units for a dissertation varies among doctoral programs and usually ranges between 12 and 24 units.

Students are expected to maintain continuous registration in a thesis/dissertation course (or continuum) each academic term until they successfully complete all of the requirements of the thesis/dissertation. This also includes summer and minimester for those students who work with their chair or committee members on their thesis/dissertation during these terms.

The student's thesis and dissertation committees should be set up and approved before the student registers for thesis/dissertation course. The thesis or dissertation committee approval form must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies for the Dean's approval and signature before the student registers for a thesis/dissertation or thesis/dissertation continuum course. After thesis or dissertation committee is approved, the department, in consultation with the thesis/dissertation chairperson sets up the courses. Departments should prepare separate course term files, with different section numbers, for each thesis and dissertation student. On the Course Term File, thesis or dissertation chairperson is listed as the primary instructor. The course term file should be submitted to the Office of the Registrar, as occurs for other courses. If the thesis or dissertation course has been set up correctly, only the thesis or dissertation chairperson will have access to the grade roster and be able to submit grades.

At the end of the thesis or dissertation work, the student will present an oral defense to the committee. Oral defenses are open to the university community. The committee may require the student to make corrections or additions to the thesis or dissertation. Once the committee has approved the thesis/dissertation, the student will submit an electronic draft to gradformat@towson.edu in the Office of Graduate Studies, the approval form signed by the members of the thesis committee, and the Internet Release Form. The student should make sure that the format of the signature pages is correct before getting signatures. The Office of Graduate Studies then will check the thesis/dissertation for technical details (margins, page numbering, etc.).

The student will need to make corrections to technical details identified by the Office of Graduate Studies. After making the corrections, the student will submit an electronic version of the final version to gradformat@towson.edu as an attachment in Word or PDF format. The Graduate Studies Dean then will sign the approval page. The Office of Graduate Studies will notify the thesis/dissertation chairperson and the Graduation Office when the Graduate Studies dean signs the approval form. The thesis/dissertation will be forwarded to the Library for archival and access, with the student's permission via the Internet Release Form. After approval of the thesis/dissertation, the grade for all thesis and thesis continuum courses is given by the thesis advisor.

Thesis and Dissertation Grading

It is the responsibility of the instructor to post a grade in PeopleSoft at the end of each term when a student is enrolled in thesis, dissertation or continuum credits.

1. Students who successfully complete thesis or dissertation courses (usually 896, 897, 898, 997, or 998) will receive a grade of S (Satisfactory).
2. Students who are making progress towards completing the thesis or dissertation while enrolled in thesis or dissertation courses but have remaining work to complete will receive a grade of IP (In Progress).
 - a. Students who have not fulfilled all of the required number of units for the thesis/dissertation coursework will continue to register for thesis or dissertation courses until they complete the number required by their program. They will continue to receive a grade of IP, if they are making satisfactory progress but do not complete all of the work required for the thesis or dissertation.
3. Students who have enrolled in the maximum number of thesis/dissertation units and are now enrolled in thesis/dissertation continuum courses as they continue to work on their thesis/dissertation will receive:
 - a. A grade of S, if they demonstrate satisfactory progress in the current term for their thesis/dissertation.
 - b. A grade of U, if they demonstrate unsatisfactory progress in the current term on their thesis/dissertation.
4. Once the thesis or dissertation has been completed, the faculty member will send an email via their Towson University email account to the Registrar's Office indicating that a change in grade from IP to S should be applied to the student's thesis or dissertation coursework (896, 897, 898, 997 or 998).

The Office of Graduate Studies will monitor the thesis/dissertation format and will be the final office notifying the Graduation Office that a student is eligible to graduate. That is, students will be eligible to graduate only after they complete 1) the course requirements for the thesis or dissertation as indicated by the grade posted by the instructor and 2) the thesis/dissertation formatting and submission requirements for the Office of Graduate Studies as outlined in the Towson University Graduate Thesis Guidelines.

**APPENDIX D: Office of Graduate Studies Suggested Timetable of Deadlines
for Finishing Thesis/Dissertation Work 1, 2, 3**

	Fall term	Spring term	Summer term
Thesis draft to advisor	October	March/ April	Early July
Oral defense	Mid- November	Mid- April	Mid- July
Final Corrections to Committee Members	1- 2 weeks after defense	1- 2 weeks after defense	1- 2 weeks after defense
Final Committee Approval & Signatures	Early December	Early May	End of July
Near Final Draft to Grad Studies Office	Mid to End of November	Late April/ Early May	Early August
Format corrections	Exam week	Exam week	Early August
Final submission to Grad Studies Office	Last day of exams	Last day of exams	End of Summer session
Submission of grade by Committee Chairperson	Last day of exams	Last day of exams	End of Summer session

*Students are encouraged to submit their work earlier, as these dates reflect final deadlines for submission. Program or department guidelines supersede these dates if they require earlier deadlines than those published in the Office of Graduate Studies Guidelines for Preparing Theses and Dissertations.

APPENDIX E: End of Program Checklist

Master's Degree Students

_____ Apply for Graduation at the start of the term in which you expect to graduate. If you do not graduate in that term, you must reapply for graduation in the following term). First time applicants can complete the application through their Student Dashboard:

<https://pslogin.towson.edu/PSLogin/?env=CS9PRD>

_____ Late applicants, students wanting to change or withdraw their application, and students denied for graduation, please email the Graduation Office at graduation@towson.edu.

_____ Check your program sheet to confirm that you have completed all the required courses successfully (without any Incompletes, no more than two C grades, and no more than three 500- level courses) as well as any special assignments such as internships, clinical, etc.

_____ Satisfy requirements within your Department/Program for writing and defending.

_____ Follow the Thesis/Dissertation Guidelines carefully and submit an electronic draft to The Office of Graduate Studies for the format review and clearance of the thesis.

After clearance of the draft copy, submit to the Office of Graduate Studies:

_____ A final electronic copy 1 of your thesis and all supporting documentation

_____ Complete DocuSign [Internet Release Form](#)

*Keep in mind that Microsoft Word for Mac checks and formats pages differently than the Windows version.

Doctoral Students

_____ Apply for Graduation at the start of the term in which you expect to graduate. (If you do not graduate in that term, you must reapply for graduation in the following term). First time applicants can complete the application through their Student Dashboard:

<https://pslogin.towson.edu/PSLogin/?env=CS9PRD>

_____ Late applicants, students wanting to change or withdraw their application, & students denied for graduation, please email the Graduation Office at graduation@towson.edu.

_____ Satisfy requirements within your Department/Program for writing and defending.

_____ Follow the Dissertation Guidelines carefully and submit an electronic draft to Office of Graduate Studies for review of the format and the clearance of the dissertation/project.

After clearance of the draft copy, submit to the Office of Graduate Studies:

_____ A final electronic copy 1 of your thesis/dissertation and all supporting documentation

_____ Complete DocuSign [Internet Release Form](#)

_____ Complete Survey of Earned Doctorates at <https://sed-nces.org>.

*Keep in mind that Microsoft Word for Mac checks and formats pages differently than the Windows version.

Commencement Ceremony

_____ Order your cap, gown, and hood from the University Store. For more information about preparation for commencement, check the University's commencement website:

<https://www.towson.edu/academics/commencement/graduates/doctoral-candidates.html>