

Thesis Guide

Prepared for students of West Texas A&M

by

The Staff of Graduate School

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INTRODUCTION

The following information is intended to summarize the major elements of thesis preparation. Students should consult their thesis advisers and/or the style manual of their academic discipline for answers to questions specific to their research project. If your discipline does not have a preferred style manual, consult the Associate Dean of Graduate School.

Sometimes the instructions in this guide will conflict with the standards of a particular discipline or the needs of a particular project. If that happens, the Associate Dean of the Graduate School can coordinate with thesis advisers to find a solution.

When selecting the thesis option, students should always carefully choose their subject, major advisers, and committee members. Furthermore, students should realize that the thesis process is creative and will usually take longer than *a priori* expectations.

PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS

For students to smoothly complete the final part of their degrees while writing their thesis, it is important for them to be aware of and follow the necessary West Texas A&M procedures. This section outlines the University and Graduate School procedures for graduate students writing a thesis.

Thesis Option

Master's students who elect the thesis option:

- Must register for Thesis 6301 when research begins.
- In each subsequent semester except summer terms, students must register for Thesis 6302 until the Dean of Graduate School has accepted the thesis.
- Students who graduate in the summer must enroll in Thesis 6302 in one of the two summer sessions.
- Students may only have to pay the current tuition rate for each enrollment of Thesis 6302. Under certain circumstances, West Texas A&M may waive all additional fees. To qualify, students can submit the [form](#) found on the Graduate School's Webpage.
- Students must be continuously enrolled to complete their degrees. Students who fail to enroll in Thesis 6302 may be subject to a reinstatement process when returning to West Texas A&M.

Thesis Committee

During a student's first thesis enrollment, students should consult with their program coordinator to appoint a thesis committee. Thesis committees have at least three members. Some programs have specific guidelines for thesis committee composition. Generally, the committee will consist of a chair, who will be the student's major adviser, and at least one other member of the student's academic department. Additional members from outside the academic department may also be appointed as appropriate. Members from outside West Texas A&M can be appointed as graduate faculty and serve on committees when appropriate.

For some programs, students will form their committee much earlier in their program. For those students, the committee is formed when a plan of study is filed with the Graduate School usually in their second semester. The Graduate Committee Form should be completed and sent to the Graduate School as soon as the committee is established.

Research Compliance

West Texas A&M University is committed to following all federal and state regulations, as well as Texas A&M University System policies and regulations, and West Texas A&M University rules and procedures concerning research compliance, including research under the oversight of the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC), Institutional Review Board on Human Subjects (IRB), and the Institutional Animal Care and Usage Committee (IACUC). For a comprehensive review of these compliance procedures, please view the following link: [Academic and Research Environmental Health and Safety | WTAMU](#)

Before you begin your thesis research, please consult with your major adviser and other faculty in your program for guidance as to what approvals you will need to begin your research. Additionally, for further information, you may contact the research office at 806.651.2270

Upon completion of your research, the Graduate School requires a hard copy of your research approval letter(s) from the applicable research committee(s). Please submit this with your title page, signature page, and abstract. Please note: There are some types of research that does not require research committee approval – contact your advisor or the research office for confirmation. Conducting unapproved research is a serious research compliance violation and will be investigated according to university procedures:

[15.99.05.W1.05AR WTAMU Potential Non-Compliance in the Course of Human Subjects Research](#)

[15.99.05.W1.07AR WTAMU Potential Non-Compliance in the Course of Vertebrate Animal Care and Use Research](#)

[15.99.03.W1.04AR Ethics in Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work: Research Misconduct](#)

Research Committee Descriptions

The following is a description of the WTAMU research compliance committees. The following link connects to list of committee members:

<https://wtaccess.wtamu.edu/committees/>

Institutional Review Board (IRB): The Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects ascertains the acceptability of proposed research involving human subjects. The IRB is charged with the protection of human subjects used in research at the University by

complying with regulations specified by the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) operating under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, as well as with other ethical and professional standards. The IRB is advisory to the Vice President of Research and Compliance who reports to the President on all matters relating to research and compliance. For additional information, please visit: [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\) | WTAMU](#)

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC): The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee is charged with the protection of animal subjects used in research at the University by complying with regulations specified by the Animal Welfare Act, 7 U.S.C. 2131-2159; 9CFR 2.22,2.80, and 37102(g) and operating under the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. The IACUC is advisory to the Vice President of Research and Compliance who reports to the President on all matters relating to research and compliance. For additional information, please visit: [Institutional Animal Care and Use | WTAMU](#)

The Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC): The Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) is responsible for reviewing and approving recombinant DNA, infectious agents, and biohazard research at WTAMU and has overall oversight responsibility for the Biosafety Program at WTAMU as required by the Biohazardous Use Authorization (BUA). IBC members and chair are appointed in accordance with National Institutes of Health Guidelines. The IBC is advisory to the Vice President of Research and Compliance who reports to the President on all matters relating to research and compliance. For additional information, please visit: [Institutional Biosafety Committee \(IBC\) | WTAMU](#)

Thesis Deadlines

Each semester, the Graduate School posts when theses are due. Students should consult the Graduate School Calendar.

- Nine weeks before graduation: The preliminary draft of the entire thesis should be turned in to the student's major adviser.
- Five weeks before graduation: The final copy of the thesis should be presented to the major adviser and to the Associate Dean of Graduate School for final checks of content and format. Ultimately, the final thesis will be submitted to [Vireo system](#).
- After final approval of the thesis by the committee (this final approval will include the thesis defense) and by Graduate School, a signature page must be circulated among the student's committee, department, college and Graduate School for required signatures. Please note that all theses will be uploaded to the WTAMU institutional repository at the Texas Digital Library (through the Vireo system), and the signature page will not be included in this submission.
- In addition to the signature page, Graduate School requires that students submit a paper copy of their title page and abstract to be filed with the signature page. This must be done before the publication deadline.
- Once all corrections are made, students will submit their theses to the Graduate School using [Vireo's web page](#). Instructions for this process and the particulars of each of these steps are presented later in this guide.

Students should coordinate with their committees to ensure that each of these steps, including the defense, is finished smoothly and within all published deadlines.

WRITING THE THESIS

The thesis should be an independent professional effort finished under the supervision of the faculty. In their thesis, students should write in clear English and demonstrate an understanding of the literature and research methods of the field. In addition, students should present and document their original research or scholarly activity academic manner that is equal to someone with a master's degree. In their thesis, students should clearly explain how their scholarly activity adds to the literature of the discipline. Students should write their thesis according to the parameters in the guide that defines uniform standards of style and format but also allows flexibility to satisfy the practices of each academic discipline and the needs of a particular student.

The thesis should read as a continuous document with continuity from chapter to chapter. While there does need to be a single, unifying Introduction, several studies, experiments, etc., can be presented in separate chapters. Each chapter can have its own subdivisions (Introduction, Discussion, Summary, e.g.). Unless a student's committee chair/discipline dictates otherwise, each thesis must have only one Abstract and only one Reference section.

The documentation of the research/scholarly activity must be exhaustive. Liberal use of tables and figures is encouraged with a full explanation in the text. Graduate School does not have a minimum or maximum length for a thesis. Thesis length varies

depending on the topic, discipline and degree sought by the author. Students should write enough to explore their topics fully.

West Texas A&M is a public, regional institution. Its mission clearly implies that any research conducted under its support should ultimately benefit the public. As required by this mission, the Graduate School at West Texas A&M has decided that all theses will be made available through open access via the WTAMU digital repository. Students are required to submit their theses to this system of open access. Exceptions can only be made with the permission of the Dean of Graduate School.

HOW TO GET HELP

The first contact for all issues concerning thesis research is the student's major adviser.

If the student should need help beyond that, the student should contact the Graduate School.

Students should direct their questions about administrative concerns with the thesis or about graduation to the Graduate School's thesis coordinator:

Heather Wilson
102E Killgore Research Center
(806)651-2739
hewilson@wtamu.edu

Students should direct their questions concerning research or the student's committee to the Associate Dean of Graduate School:

Rex Pjesky
106 Killgore Research Center
(806)651-2737
rpjesky@wtamu.edu

WT's Writing Center also provides help to thesis students:

[Writing Center | WTAMU](#)

THESIS ORGANIZATION/ARRANGEMENT

Students should arrange the thesis as follows:

1. Title page
2. Signature Page
3. Preface (optional)
4. Abstract
5. Acknowledgements (optional)
6. Table of Contents
7. List of Tables (if applicable)
8. List of Figures (if applicable)
9. List of Illustrations (if applicable)
10. Text (students should consult their chair for advice on organization)
11. List of Works Cited (or References)
12. Appendix

Samples of all of these are at the end of this guide. Students should follow their discipline's style within each of these categories. (Use the reference, citation style that is acceptable to your area of study, for example.)

Thesis Title Page

The thesis title page should begin with the title in all caps and centered in inverse pyramid format. Inverse pyramid format means that the title should be in progressively

fewer characters as lines are added to the title. If, for example, your title is two lines long, the top line of the title should contain more characters. In addition, if the title is more than one line, the lines should be single spaced. One inch down from the title centered should be “by” followed by the name of the student double-spaced beneath the word “by.” One inch below that should be:

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
[Degree Name]
Major Subject: [Major Subject]

One inch below that should be:

West Texas A&M University
Canyon, Texas
[Graduation Month Year]

Thesis Chapter and Other Major Section Titles and Format

The beginning of each chapter should begin with the title Chapter followed by the appropriate roman numerals in capital letters centered two inches from the top of the page. There should then be a triple space (two blank lines) before the title of the chapter. The title of the chapter should appear in capital letters. If the title of the chapter contains more than one-line, single space and use the inverted pyramid form described above. There is then a double space before the text. Other appropriate headings and subheadings may be used as the discretion of your adviser. Graduate School recommends following the style of your field of study. If your discipline has no style manual, follow the guidelines of a leading journal in your field.

All other major sections (Abstract, Preface, etc.) should follow the same general guidelines concerning spacing.

Abstract

Your thesis must include an abstract of appropriate length (as determined by your project and discipline). Like all other major sections, the abstract should begin with the title “ABSTRACT” centered two inches from the top of the page. Its margins should follow the rest of the document. Abstracts generally have four parts: the purpose of the study, procedures used, the results, and the conclusions.

Thesis Quality Control

The student alone is responsible, ultimately, for the mechanical correctness, typing accuracy, and general neatness of each draft of the thesis, including the final draft. The student should carefully proofread the thesis for all types of errors. Students, and not advisers, are solely responsible for the final proofreading of the thesis and presenting it to the committee members for their final approval.

While he/she is not responsible for the final content, the Associate Dean of the Graduate School will review each thesis for integrity before Graduate School accepts it,

Photographs and Illustrations

If a student includes photographs and/or illustrations, the student must be able to embed those into the text of the document. Students should follow the guidelines of their discipline. Any variance must have prior approval of the Dean of Graduate School. Students should be aware that some images could be subject to copyright; obtain permission if required.

THESIS FORMAT

Thesis Page Margins

- Left: 1.5” on all pages
- Right: 1” (not justified) on all pages
- All title pages: 2” from the top of page
- All non-title pages: 1” from the top

Thesis Page Numbers

- All page numbers must be centered 1” from the bottom of the page.
- On preliminary pages use lower case roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, etc.)
- In the body, use Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.)

Consider the title page to be Roman numeral “i,” but do not number it. The first numeral to appear in the thesis is Roman numeral “ii” on the page that follows the title page. All preliminary pages are numbered by centering one inch above the bottom of the page.

Pagination of the body of the thesis will begin with the first page of Chapter I. Consecutive Arabic numerals will continue throughout the thesis, lists of works cited, and appendices. Center the numerals one inch above the bottom of each page.

Thesis Line Spacing

The body of the thesis must be double-spaced, except for block quotations and the text within a table, illustration, figure, etc. Text in a table, illustration, figure, etc., can be single or double-spaced at the discretion of the student.

Thesis Font and Font Size

The thesis should be in 12-point Times New Roman font. Exceptions would be text within tables, figures, illustrations, etc. The text in these should be either 10- or 12-point Times New Roman Font.

A Special Note about Most Word Processors

Students should also check the margin spacing of the tables, figures, and illustrations.

Do not assume that if you have told the word processor to provide a one- inch margin that you always get a one-inch margin. Sometimes the computer will allow parts of large tables to spill into the specified margins.

Equations

Equation numbering and placement are at the discretion of the student but must be consistent. Equations must be in 12-point Times New Roman font.

Footnotes/Endnotes

Footnotes or endnotes may be used at the student's discretion. They can be numbered sequentially (beginning with "1") throughout the entire thesis or can begin with "1" for each separate chapter.

References and Citations

Each thesis must include a reference section listing the literature that the student cites.

There must be a one-to-one ratio of literature cited in the text and the list of references at

the end of the thesis. (That is, all things cited in the text must be listed in the Reference section, and everything in the Reference section must be cited in the thesis.) The Reference list should be consistent, accurate, and complete.

The number of reference styles is vast. Although students can use whatever style their discipline uses, the references generally should follow these guidelines:

- Consistency in capitalization, punctuation, and ordering of information within each citation
- Consistency in the order of citations (alphabetized, alphabetized and numbered, or non-alphabetized and numbered)
- Consistency in the use of italics, quotation marks, and bold type
- Volume number and page number for journal articles must be listed
- Publisher and city for books; city for universities, labs or corporations must be listed
- A date (year) for every citation must be listed
- Sufficient information for the retrieval of unpublished material should be present
- Author or entity, title, date or date accessed, and the specific web address for Internet material must be listed
- Consistency in designation of state names (abbreviated or not)
- Consistency in journal names or abbreviations
- Consistency in ordering multiple entries with the same first author.

Students can use either single-spacing within each citation and double-spacing between each citation or double-spacing for everything. Generally, the first line of the reference is

against the left margin while the second and other lines are tabbed in the same distance as paragraphs. Consistency is important regardless of style used.

Text mentions of citations should follow the style of your discipline.

Appendix

Appendices are optional. They are generally used for supplementary material. The appendix goes after the Reference section. Page numbering continues from the Reference section.

Media Files

If you have files other than a PDF document, the [Vireo system](#) can accept them, although they will not be linked to the main thesis. Please consult your adviser or the Graduate School for questions about how to include multimedia or other files with your thesis.

THESIS SUBMITTAL AND REVIEW

The first step in finalizing the thesis is the defense. Students should work with their major advisers and their committees to arrange for the defense of their thesis. Once the defense is successful and any required changes are made to the thesis, students are ready to prepare and submit the thesis to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School.

Once the thesis committee has approved the thesis, students should convert the thesis to PDF format to transmit the thesis to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School. Most current word processors can convert documents into PDF format.

The student then uploads the PDF file to Graduate School using [Vireo](#), a submission software for electronic theses. If you have trouble, please contact the Associate Dean of Graduate School.

Public Availability of the Thesis

All theses of students graduating from West Texas A&M will be available online through the [West Texas A&M University Library](#) and the [WTAMU institutional repository](#) through the [Texas Digital Library](#).

Any exceptions, which may be required if there are patent/proprietary issues with an individual student's research, must be granted to the student by the Dean of the Graduate School.

The Graduate School generally will **not** make exceptions for students who wish to temporarily embargo (or hide) their research for a short time before publication. Students

need to be sensitive to this. Some journals/publishers allow work to be published that has been previously published as a thesis and some do not. Students with questions about this policy should contact the Associate Dean of Graduate School.

Students also need to be aware of the possibility of publishing conflicts if they publish part of their research before they finish their thesis. West Texas A&M permits and encourages students to independently publish research, even before they finish their degrees. However, when students do so, they need to be careful that they do not make any agreements that would prevent West Texas A&M from publishing their work as part of the thesis. Questions about this should also be directed to the Associate Dean of Graduate School.

Corrections to the Thesis

If students carefully follow the instructions in this guide, no corrections will be needed to the thesis when they submit it to the Graduate School. If the Graduate School requires any corrections, students may ONLY make the corrections requested by the Graduate School.

Graduate School recommends students work directly with the Associate Dean of Graduate School for the final approval of the thesis. Students should submit the thesis directly to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School. The student will make any requested changes to the original file, convert the revised document to a new PDF, and upload the new PDF through [Vireo](#). A student should make corrections quickly to meet the Graduate School's deadlines. If a student does not make corrections in a timely fashion, graduation may be delayed.

In the event the Graduate School declares a manuscript unacceptable, the Graduate School will return the manuscript to the student, the major adviser, and department head with a clear explanation of the deficiencies that need to be addressed.

Graduate School will review manuscripts in the order received. Students should realize that 5 to 10 working days is a reasonable turnaround time for thesis review. Students should plan accordingly.

Signature Page and Abstract

The only papers the Graduate School requires are a title page, a signature page, and an abstract. No bound paper copy is required. If the student would like a paper-bound copy, complete with a signature page, the Graduate School and the Library can help facilitate the process. Students may want signed copies for themselves, loved ones, their department, or advisors.

COMMON MISTAKES

Here are some common mistakes the Graduate School sees on initial thesis submissions.

- Wrong date on the title page. The date should be the month and year of graduation, not thesis completion.
- The left margin should be 1.5 inches. This is essential since the thesis will be bound and placed on the library shelf.
- Page number on the title page. The pagination should start at “ii” on the next page.
- Two-inch top margin on all the first pages of major sections in the front matter and the first page of each chapter in the body. The easiest way to set this margin is to manually enter the text and use the ruler to mark when you’ve reached 2 inches. The two-inch margin is one additional inch beyond the programmed one-inch margin.
- Start the pagination in the body of the thesis with an Arabic “1” and continue with Arabic numerals for the rest of the document.
- MS Word may not obey your instruction to have a one-inch right margin when you have a large table, figure, or illustration. Check that your tables, etc., fit within the specified margins. Use a 10-point font if necessary. (8-point font is acceptable but only if absolutely necessary.)

- If you have tables, etc., in landscape format, the page numbers need to be oriented on the page, so they look correct if the thesis were printed in a book. The easiest way to do this is to image the artifact and rotate it on the page. Make the bottom of the artifact face the right.

THESIS FINAL CHECKLIST

1. Major Adviser and Committee have approved the thesis.
2. Body of thesis is double spaced (no more, no less.)
3. The manuscript has been checked for spelling, grammar and style.
4. The references are correct. There is an exact one-to-one match of references at the end and referenced items in the text
5. Margins are correct, including the margins of tables, figures, etc.
6. Page numbers are correct, and agree with Table of Contents, List of Tables, etc.
7. All title pages have 2-inch margin from the top.
8. All other pages have 1 inch margin from the top.
9. All tables and figures fit within the margins.
10. Photographs are properly scanned and look professional.
11. Double check after conversion to PDF.

THESIS SAMPLE PAGES

Following this page are several examples of what your final document should look like.

- Title Page
- Abstract
- Acknowledgments
- Signature Page
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables
- Body (Chapter title format)
- References

EXPLORING THE EVALUATION PROCESS AND ASSESSMENT
OF WEB-BASED CLASSROOMS

by

K. Diane Hall

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Major Subject: Communication

West Texas A&M University

Canyon, Texas

May 2002

ABSTRACT

Using Barro regression analysis, this paper finds evidence that per capita state spending on education converged from 1977 to 2006 across the U.S. states. Convergence was conditional on a state's passage of a lottery for education during the time period. Despite evidence that the convergence of state education spending was conditional on the passage of an education lottery, the relative increase in education spending among many states that passed education lotteries was much greater than the revenue from the lotteries themselves. So, education lotteries seemed to be part of a larger bundle of policies in low spending states to increase education funding.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank her major adviser and committee members for their help and guidance.

This thesis is dedicated to my family for their love and support and encouragement through my degree.

Approved:

[Chairman, Thesis Committee]

[Date]

[Member, Thesis Committee]

[Date]

[Member, Thesis Committee]

[Date]

[Department Head/Direct Supervisor]

[Date]

[Dean, Academic College]

[Date]

[Dean, Graduate School]

[Date]

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO A REALLY GREAT THESIS: HOW EXACTLY DO YOU FORMAT THOSE CHAPTER HEADINGS?

This chapter introduces the topic about how you write and format a thesis. Notice how the title is in inverse pyramid form? In this part of the manuscript, since it is an introduction, an author would want to explain to readers what to expect. Then it is on to the first subheading, which the author can format at his/her own discretion.

Using Double Spaces Properly

Everyone who writes a thesis at West Texas A&M needs to know how and when to do double space text. The entire body of the thesis should be double spaced, like this example. You can take some liberty on the spacing on your reference page as the examples on the next two pages illustrate.

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