



WCU Graduate Thesis Guide

*8th Edition
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GRADUATE SCHOOL & RESEARCH



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INTRODUCTION

The *Guide to Preparing Graduate Theses 8th Edition* provides instructions and regulations for completing all master's theses and thesis-exhibits at WCU.

Please read this guide carefully before preparing your thesis. All students preparing a thesis must conform to the rules explained here for the abstract, format, arrangement of contents, submission, and approval of thesis documents.

All of the resources and links listed in this guide can be found on the [Thesis and Disquisition Information and Resources](#) web page.

Please note that this guide does not give rules for doctoral disquisitions. Doctoral candidates should consult the *Guide to Formatting Disquisitions*, available in Blackboard in the Ed.D. Student Center and in the Ed.D. Faculty Center.

For specific information regarding style, please refer to the most recent edition of the style manual used in your disciplinary field (see [Style Guides by Discipline](#)). If there is a discrepancy between the style guide of the discipline and this guide, the WCU Thesis Guide takes precedence. If no applicable rule can be found in either this guide or your discipline guide, follow APA rules.

- If in doubt about anything in this guide, consult your thesis director or the Graduate School.
- Do NOT use old theses, from any school, as a template.

Final responsibility for the format and content of any thesis remains with the student.

FORMATTING

General Formatting

Your entire thesis must conform to these general rules:

Margins

- Top, Bottom, Left, and Right margins equal 1 inch.

Font

- Times New Roman or Arial 11- or 12-point font ONLY. All text must be the *same font and size*, including page numbers. *All text must be in black ink.*

Spacing

- Double space text.
- Add one double space after the main ([chapter](#)) headings.
- Single space text on the title page, table of contents, list of tables, footnotes, and other special text.
- Add three single spaces after the main heading on single-spaced pages ([see sample](#)).
- Do NOT justify the text.
- Set tabs at ½”.
- Indent paragraphs ½”.
- NOTE: Before you begin—Microsoft Word (versions 2007 and newer) automatically set the line spacing at 1.08 and include a space after each paragraph. *You must manually set the line spacing at 1.0 or 2.0* (depending on the thesis section) and remove the extra space after the paragraph. This is best done before you begin the document, by updating the styles on the Home ribbon.

Pagination

- Use lowercase Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, etc.) on all pages preceding the first page of the body of the text (Chapter One or Introduction).
- The title page counts as page i, but the number does not appear.
- Use Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) beginning with the first page of the body of the text (Introduction or Chapter One).
- Center all page numbers at the bottom of the page $\frac{3}{4}$ " from the bottom edge. If your document contains landscape pages, the page numbers should appear in the same place as on all other pages for consistency.

Tables/Figures

- Tables and figures must not exceed margins.
- *Number and label* all tables/figures according to the appropriate [Style Guide](#).
- If they are not original, you must cite them and comply with PROQUEST/UMI's copyright rules.
- Extensive tables/figures should appear at the end of the chapter or in an appendix.

Footnotes/Endnotes

- If used, format footnotes and endnotes according to the appropriate [Style Guide](#).
- Place footnotes on the same page as the referenced text.

Formatting Checklist

- The [Formatting Checklist](#) is a convenient way to check the formatting of your final document before submission to Pro Quest.
- Check the formatting before AND after the PDF conversion process.

Section-Specific Formatting

Order and Components

- Please see the [sample pages](#) for illustrations. Links to the sample pages appear at the beginning of each section.
- Arrange sections in the following order:
 1. [Title Page](#)
 2. [Acknowledgments](#) (optional)
 3. [Table of Contents](#)
 4. [List of Tables](#) (if used)
 5. [List of Figures](#) (if used)
 6. [List of Abbreviations/Symbols](#) (if used)
 7. [Abstract](#)
 8. [Body Text](#)
 9. [References/Works Cited/Bibliography](#)
 10. [Appendices](#) (if used)
 11. [Special Materials](#) (if used)

Title Page

[Sample Title Page](#)

- Center the text of the title page vertically and horizontally.
- Center the title in ALL CAPS.
- Center the following statement below the title:

A thesis presented to the faculty of the Graduate School of Western Carolina
University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of [Enter full name of

the degree] (e.g., Master of Arts in History, Master of Fine Arts, Specialist in School Psychology).

- Use your full legal name in the byline.
- List the director and committee members.
- List the month and year of your defense.
- Include the copyright—if desired and paid for. (This is optional. Most master’s students do not need to copyright their theses, though some exceptions apply. Ask your director for advice.) ProQuest/UMI offers copyright information on their [Resources and Guidelines](#) page.
- The title page counts as page “i” of the thesis, but no number should appear on the page.

Acknowledgments

[Sample Acknowledgments Page](#)

This page is optional, but most students choose to acknowledge their director, committee, and others who assisted with the thesis. Follow the sample, and remember to keep your language formal.

- The heading “ACKNOWLEDGMENTS” should be centered in ALL CAPS one inch from the top of the page.
- Begin the text of the acknowledgment two double spaces below the heading. (In word processing, hit enter twice after the heading to obtain the correct spacing before the text.)

Table of Contents

[Sample Table of Contents](#)

- The table of contents should list ALL parts of the thesis that follow it.

- All titles, subheadings, and page numbers must correspond exactly to the body of the thesis.
- List the bibliography and all appendices in the table of contents.
- Center the heading “TABLE OF CONTENTS” in ALL CAPS one inch from the top of the page.
- Single space the table and use tab leaders between titles and page numbers.
- Begin the list three single spaces below the heading. (In word processing, hit enter three times after the heading to obtain the correct spacing before the text.)
- Align page numbers with the right margin.
- For best results, use the automatic heading formatting within the word processing software. This enables the automatic creation of a table of contents that will populate the correct titles, subheadings, and page numbers. (You must modify the automatic headings so they conform to WCU thesis formatting standards for font and space before and after headings)

List of Tables

[Sample List of Tables](#)

- If you have tables in the body of the thesis, you must create an accurate master list.
- List tables appearing in the appendices here as well—unless the table is the only item in the appendix.
- Number tables consecutively with Arabic numerals.
- Precede the number of the appendix table with the appendix letter (A1 for the first table in Appendix A).
- The list of tables follows the formatting rules for the table of contents.

List of Figures

[Sample List of Figures](#)

- If you have figures in the body of the thesis, you must create an accurate master list.
- List the figures appearing in the appendices here as well (unless the figure is the only item in the appendix).
- Number figures consecutively with Arabic numerals.
- Precede the number of the appendix figure with the appendix letter (A1 for the first figure in Appendix A).
- Photographs/pictures are considered “figures.” Follow the rules for figures explained in this section, including labeling.
- If any pictures are not your original material, you must follow **PROQUEST/UMI** [copyright rules](#).
- The list of figures follows the formatting rules for the table of contents.

List of Abbreviations

- If you use abbreviations or symbols frequently, you should create a master list.
- Ask your director whether you need this list.

Abstract

[Sample Abstract](#)

- Consult with your director about how to write the abstract—a brief (approximately 250 to 500 words) summary of your thesis.
- This abstract should reflect the changes made since your initial abstract.
- You will be required to copy and paste the text of your abstract to the submission form in PROQUEST/UMI as well as including it in the text of your thesis.

- Center the heading “ABSTRACT” in ALL CAPS one inch from the top of the page.
- Align the title of the thesis to the left margin in ALL CAPS two double spaces below the heading. (In word processing, hit enter twice after the heading to obtain the correct spacing before the text.)
- The following three lines (aligned to the left margin in regular font) contain:

Author’s Full Name, followed by degree

Western Carolina University (Date of thesis defense in parentheses)

Director: Thesis director’s name

Most Abstracts are between 250 and 500 words. [General formatting](#) rules apply. The abstract should be a single paragraph. Do not indent the first line.

Body Text

[Sample Body Text](#)

- Each major section/chapter of the thesis must begin on a new page.
- Center all chapter headings in ALL CAPS one inch from the top of the page.
- Begin the text of the chapter two double spaces below the heading. (In word processing, hit enter twice after the heading to obtain the correct spacing before the text.)
- Sub-headings within the chapters should follow the style guide in your discipline.
- If your style guide does not specify subheading formatting, use APA subheading formatting guidelines.

References/Works Cited/Bibliography

[Sample References](#)

- Bibliographic entry formats vary from discipline to discipline.
- Please consult your [discipline guide](#) to ensure you are using the proper format.
- Be sure to use the same format consistently throughout the thesis.
- If your discipline does not specify a format for references, use APA formatting guidelines.
- Your director must check your references.
- Center the appropriate heading (References, Works Cited, Bibliography, etc.) in ALL CAPS one inch from the top of the page.
- Begin the text of the references section two double spaces below the heading. (In word processing, hit enter twice after the heading to obtain the correct spacing before the text.)

Appendices (optional)

- If your thesis has appendices, they must follow the same rules as the body text.
- If tables or figures are used, follow the rules in this guide and guidelines in your discipline.

Special Materials (optional)

- The following instructions pertain to special materials that are NOT part of the thesis document.
- PROQUEST/UMI supplies special instructions for uploading supplemental files at the time of thesis submission.

Non-print media.

- Upload musical or sound recordings, electronic slideshows, and other non-print materials separately when submitting the thesis to the PROQUEST/UMI.

- Follow PROQUEST/UMI [copyright rules](#) for any visual/sound file that is not original material.

File types.

Video: mpeg is recommended; .avi and .mov (Apple) are also acceptable.

Audio: wav is recommended; .aif, .midi, and .snd are also acceptable.

Oversized materials, slides, and other special cases.

- The use of non-electronic slides or special printouts is not recommended.
- If you have unusual materials or circumstances that cannot be reproduced electronically, consult with your thesis director.

For more information on how to include media files with the final thesis you submit to the Graduate School, see “[Preparing your manuscript for submission \(including supplemental files\)](#)” on the ProQuest/UMI [Resources and Guidelines](#) web page.

Do not embed media files in the final PDF version of your thesis.

SUBMISSION PROCESS

The Graduate School now requires Electronic Theses and Disquisitions (ETDs) instead of printed copies. Some advantages of ETDs over hard-copy manuscripts include:

- Ease of use
- Simplified approval and printing processes
- Broader exposure for your research
- The ability to link directly to your thesis from your homepage and/or electronic CV
- Professional development experience as you learn the basic skills of scholarly publishing in an electronic format
- The option to have your thesis accessible to any potential reader at any time

*Since Fall 2010, all theses have been archived through ProQuest/UMI and the North Carolina Online Collection of Knowledge and Scholarship (NC DOCKS).

Pre Submission

Defense

- *Plan to complete the defense in time to meet the submission deadline. The submission deadline is approximately four weeks before graduation (**).*
- Your director will notify you when you are ready to defend your thesis, and he/she should schedule your defense before the submission deadline.
- ** For the **exact** deadline, see the [Thesis/Disquisition Information and Resources](#) web page or the Academic Calendar of the Graduate Catalog (follow the link in the Related Information section of the [Graduate School](#) homepage).
- Ask your director for help in preparing for your defense.

- Before you go to your defense, prepare an [Abstract Approval Form](#). (You may wish to prepare an extra copy, just in case.)
- Take the form(s) with you to the defense.
- After your successful defense, ask your committee to sign their approval.
- Send your signed Approval Form to the Graduate School.
- Your thesis director should grade you for your thesis credit and remove “IP” grades after your successful defense. (Directors, see the [Guide for Thesis Directors](#))
- NOTE: The Graduate School clears the thesis requirement on your degree audit after the Graduate School accepts your final revised version through ProQuest/UMI.

Formatting

- Be sure you have followed all formatting rules found in this guide (see the [formatting checklist](#)) before submitting to ProQuest/UMI.

PDF Conversion

Embedding fonts.

- Make sure all your fonts are embedded fonts (Times New Roman or Arial 11- or 12-point).
- Manuscripts without embedded fonts can cause all punctuation and formatting to disappear when the document is printed from the digital file, and may cause delays in the online publishing process.

File conversion.

- Before beginning the submission process, you should combine the text of your thesis into one document and convert it into one PDF file.
- Visit “Creating PDFs” on ProQuest’s [Resources and Guidelines](#) web page.

- If you have access to the required software (a full version of Adobe Acrobat, for example) and are familiar with the process, you may convert the file yourself.
- *Be sure to check the formatting again after you convert the file to PDF.*

Abstract

- In addition to uploading the PDF file of your thesis, you will be required to copy and paste the text of your abstract into the ProQuest/UMI submission form.

Copyright

- Read the copyright information on the [ProQuest/UMI](#) website.
- Consult your thesis director if you have questions about copyrighting your thesis.

Publishing Options

- Traditional: thesis sales eligible for royalties but not available via the internet—no student fee required.
- Open Access: no royalties but thesis available free to all via the internet (including search engine access). Student pays required fee.

Pre-submission Checklist

- Final, defended thesis document formatted to WCU rules and converted to ONE .pdf file with embedded fonts.
- Supplemental materials (slideshows, recordings, etc.) saved in approved file types.
- PROQUEST/UMI copyright rules observed for any reprinted materials, including pictures, quotes, recordings, etc.
- Abstract prepared
- Copyright and “open” vs. “traditional” publication discussed with director
- Number of bound copies determined, with help of director

- Personal funds available to pay for “open” publishing fee (if selected), as well as (if needed), copyright filing, extra bound copies, etc.
- Credit or debit card required for payment.

Submission

- Submit your formatted thesis electronically to the Graduate School via ProQuest/UMI.
- Go to www.etsadmin.com/wcu
- Click “Submit My Disquisition/Thesis.”
- Click “Create an Account” and follow the instructions provided on the webpage.

Note: You must use your catamount email address to ensure prompt delivery of information from the ProQuest/UMI system, including revision requests and final acceptance. Failure to use your catamount email (be sure to check your email frequently during the thesis review process) may result in undeliverable emails and could delay the completion of requirements for graduation.

- When your submission is complete, you will receive an email verifying your submission.
- The Graduate School is also notified via email of your submission.

Post Submission

Revision Requests

- The Graduate School must approve the thesis before it can be published in the ProQuest/UMI database.
- After your thesis has been reviewed, you will receive an email regarding the Graduate School’s approval or denial of your submission.
- You will be notified of any changes that must be made.
- You must complete all required revisions in a timely manner (we recommend submitting revisions within 48 hours).
- Be sure to monitor your email frequently during this process.

- Make only the corrections requested by the Graduate School.
- Do NOT make content changes to your thesis at this time, even if your director tells you to do so.
- Submit your revisions:
 - Log in to your PROQUEST/UMI account.
 - Go to “Revise Submission.”
 - Submit your changes as directed.

Acceptance and Publication

- When you receive notification that your submission has cleared all checks and will be delivered for publishing, the Dean of Graduate School and Research will sign your Approval Form and Graduate School staff will update your student record to reflect the completed thesis requirement.
- See the [Graduation](#) web page published by the Registrar’s Office for more information regarding graduation requirements and procedures.
- Your thesis should be available online in WCU’s database within 8–12 weeks:
<http://library.wcu.edu/> .
- One bound copy will be sent directly to Hunter Library.
- If you ordered extra copies through ProQuest/UMI, these will be mailed directly to you.
- It is your responsibility to deliver copies required by other people or departments (such as your academic department or thesis advisor).

More Information

- If you have additional questions not answered here, please visit the PROQUEST/UMI site www.etsadmin.com/wcu and select the Resources & Guidelines tab.

- You may find the Online Submission: Frequently Asked Questions section particularly helpful.

APPENDIX A: FORMATTING CHECKLIST

<p style="text-align: center;">General Document ALL PAGES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Check formatting before and after PDF conversion <input type="checkbox"/> Margins: Top, Right, Left and Bottom = 1" <input type="checkbox"/> Font: all text Arial or Times New Roman, 11- or 12-point (black) <input type="checkbox"/> Paragraph Spacing: No extra space before/after paragraphs <input type="checkbox"/> Pagination: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No page number on title page, but page counted • Front matter numbered with consecutive Roman numerals • Body and back matter numbered with consecutive Arabic numerals beginning at 1 • Page numbers at bottom center, ¾" from bottom of page <input type="checkbox"/> Parts included and in the following order: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Title page 2. Acknowledgments (optional) 3. Table of Contents 4. Lists of Tables 5. List of Figures 6. List of Abbreviations/Symbols (if used) 7. Abstract 8. Body text 9. References/Works Cited/Bibliography 10. Appendices (optional) 	<p style="text-align: center;">Table of Contents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Single-spaced <input type="checkbox"/> Heading centered and ALL CAPS <input type="checkbox"/> Three (single) spaces between Heading and text <input type="checkbox"/> Titles of all chapters and subheadings match exactly with body <input type="checkbox"/> Page numbers match exactly with body <input type="checkbox"/> Headings and subheadings indented <input type="checkbox"/> Page number references aligned right <input type="checkbox"/> Tab leaders (periods) used between text and page numbers <input type="checkbox"/> All sections, chapters, and subsections/subheadings listed <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Lists of Tables, Figures, Abbreviations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> See rules for Table of Contents. All labels in body must match front matter lists. <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Abstract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Heading centered and ALL CAPS, one (double) space between heading and text <input type="checkbox"/> Matches Abstract Sample <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Body Text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> New chapters begin on new page, titles centered and ALL CAPS <input type="checkbox"/> One (double) space between chapter title and text <input type="checkbox"/> Headings follow appropriate discipline guide (default APA) <input type="checkbox"/> All text double-spaced (except for footnotes, etc.) with no extra space before/after paragraphs <input type="checkbox"/> At least triple space between text & tables/figures <input type="checkbox"/> Tables/figures are labeled according to discipline guide (default APA) and are student's original work (follow PROQUEST/UMI copyright rules). <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Works Cited and Appendices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Heading centered and ALL CAPS, one (double) space between heading and text <input type="checkbox"/> Page numbers, headings, and margins follow same rules as body text
<p style="text-align: center;">Title Page</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Title in ALL CAPS <input type="checkbox"/> Student's full legal name in byline <input type="checkbox"/> Director and committee members listed <input type="checkbox"/> Text matches sample and "General Document" rules above <input type="checkbox"/> Copyright included IF DESIRED and paid for <input type="checkbox"/> No page number appears <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Acknowledgments (optional)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Heading centered and ALL CAPS, one (double) space between heading and text 	

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE TABLE/FIGURE LABELING

Table and Figure Titles (labels) must match the Lists of Tables and Figures exactly. Long titles may be shortened (not paraphrased) for the lists. When shortening titles, be sure to include enough text to differentiate each item.

Table 1: Sample table showing one possible configuration of data, used as an example for proper List of Tables entry

Sample Table One		
Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Data 1	Data 2	Data 3

Table 2: Sample table showing another possible configuration of data, used as an example for proper List of Tables entry

Sample Table Two			
Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Data 1	Data 2	Data 3	Data 4

These table titles can be shortened for the List of Tables:

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Sample table showing one possible configuration of data.....18
Table 2. Sample table showing another possible configuration of data18

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE PAGES

[Title Page](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[Table of Contents](#)

[List of Tables](#)

[List of Figures](#)

[Abstract](#)

[Body Text](#)

[References](#)

THESIS TITLE CENTERED IN ALL CAPS: SINGLE SPACE LONG TITLES

A thesis presented to the faculty of the Graduate School of
Western Carolina University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of [insert full name of degree].
[E.g. Master of Arts in English, Master of Fine Arts, Specialist in School Psychology]

By

Jane Ann Doe

Director: Dr. Sally Smith
Associate Professor of English
English Department

Committee Members: Dr. Herman Glimsher, English
Dr. Alan J. Smithee, English

March 2014 (Month and year of thesis defense)

©2014 by Jane Ann Doe (Optional)

(Counts as page i, but no page number appears)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

(Skip one double space)

I would like to thank my committee members and director for their assistance and encouragement. In particular,

I also extend sincere thanks to the following people, without whom this thesis would not have been possible: Albert Einstein, Lenny Bruce, and Sean Smith. Lastly, I offer my warmest regards and thanks to my parents for their continued support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

(Skip three single spaces)

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Subheading Level Three	3
Chapter Two: Chapter Title	4
Subheading Level One.....	5
Subheading Level Two	5
Subheading Level Three	6
Works Cited	7
Appendices.....	9
Appendix A: Appendix Title	10
Appendix B: Appendix Title.....	11

LIST OF TABLES

(Skip three single spaces)

Table 1. Sample Table5
Table 2. Another Sample Table6
Table A1. Sample Table in Appendix A.....8
Table A2. Another Sample Table in Appendix A.....9
Table B1. First Sample Table10
Table B2. Second Sample Table.....11

(Use the A1, A2, B1,B2 etc. headings for tables in your appendices.)

LIST OF FIGURES

(Skip three single spaces)

Figure 1. This is the First Figure.....	5
Figure 2. Here is Another.....	6
Figure A1. First Sample Figure	8
Figure A2. Another Figure.....	9
Figure B1. First Sample Second Appendix.....	10
Figure B2. Another Sample Second Appendix.....	11

(Use the A1, A2, B1,B2 etc. headings for figures in your appendices.)

ABSTRACT

(Skip one double space)

THESIS TITLE IN ALL CAPS

Amelia Cordelia Bedelia, M.F.A.

Western Carolina University (May 2014) (month and year of defense)

Director: Dr. John Smith

Enter the text of the abstract, summarizing the thesis, here. Double space the text. Most Abstracts are between 250 and 500 words. [General formatting](#) rules apply. The abstract should be a single paragraph. Do not indent the first line.

CHAPTER ONE: SAMPLE APA-STYLE SUBHEADINGS

(Skip one double space)

This page illustrates the standard APA style formatting for subheadings. Use APA formatting if your discipline does not specify the formatting for subheadings. Be sure to use subheading styles **consistently** throughout the thesis.

Subheading levels in the text must match the subheading level listed in the Table of Contents **exactly**. [General formatting](#) rules apply. Be sure to set the paragraph formatting at double space, with no extra space before/after paragraphs and subheadings. Check centered headings and subheadings to be sure the “first-line” indent has not been selected in conjunction with “centered” text formatting.

Subheading Level One

Subheading level one is centered, boldface, uppercase, and lowercase. Begin the text of this level on the next line.

Subheading Level Two

Subheading level two is flush left, boldface, uppercase and lowercase. Begin the text of this level on the next line.

Subheading level three. Subheading level three is indented, boldface, lowercase paragraph ending with a period. Begin the text of this level after the period.

Subheading level four. Subheading level four is indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase paragraph ending with a period. Begin the text of this level after the period.

REFERENCES

Begin your reference list here. Use the format approved for your discipline. Every source listed here is cited within the text of the paper. Note that the “REFERENCES” heading is in ALL CAPS (chapter-level heading) and is formatted in regular (not bold) font.