



A GUIDE TO CSUSB THESIS, PROJECT, AND DISSERTATION FORMATTING

2023-2024 edition

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CHAPTER ONE:
ORGANIZATION AND FORMATTING INSTRUCTIONS FOR THESES,
PROJECTS AND DISSERTATIONS

A thesis/project/dissertation usually consists of four major parts: (1) pre- text pages, (2) text, (3) appendices and (4) references/bibliography. (Some theses, projects and dissertations may not include an appendix.) The list below shows the pages in each part, as well as the proper page sequence:

1. Pre-text pages
 - Title Page
 - Committee Page
 - Copyright Page
 - Abstract
 - Acknowledgments (optional)
 - Dedication (optional)
 - Table of Contents
 - List of Tables (if used)
 - List of Figures (if used)
 - List of Illustrations, Symbols, etc. (if used)
2. Body of text (Chapters or Statement of Purpose)
3. Appendices (if used)
4. Documentation (Bibliography or References Cited)
5. Assigned Responsibilities Page (Social Work Program ONLY)

University Format

Nearly all programs will follow the university's format requirements described in this handbook. The only exception is Mathematics; this program provides a template for their students to use. [Mathematics formatting](#) guidelines are available on the Graduate Studies website.

Please note that this handbook is formatted to look like a thesis, project, or dissertation. The type style, chapter titles, headings, etc. can be used as an example for formatting your manuscript.

Style Guides

Your graduate program may require you to use a particular style guide for some of your formatting. The program style guide determines the format for:

1. The referencing system throughout the manuscript,
2. The list of references at the end of the work,
3. The formatting and labeling of all tables, and
4. The format for the captions for all figures.

All other format requirements set forth in this manual take precedence over any department style guide.

General Appearance

Typeface/Font

Theses/projects/dissertations should be typed double-spaced in Arial

12- point type; do not use Arial Narrow, Arial Black, Arial Rounded MT Bold, or any other variations. Use the same type throughout the manuscript – headings, chapter titles, page numbers, table of contents, etc. should be in Arial, 12-point type. The *content of appendices* is not required to adhere to the typeface requirements (maps, handouts, tables in appendix, etc.), but the appendix title pages and pages numbers should be in Arial 12-point type.

Line Spacing

All text, including lists, must be double-spaced. Exceptions to this requirement include extended quotations, bibliographies, and footnotes, which are formatted according to the style guide required by your program.

Margins

The left, or binding edge, margin should be one and one-half inches (1½”). The right margin should be one inch (1”) and the margins at the top and bottom of the page should be one and one fourth inches (1¼”). Pages should be set up to print single-sided, not double-sided. The bottom margin refers to the distance between the last line of the text and the bottom of the page. The page number will be slightly below the last line of text. These margin regulations apply to every page of the manuscript, including appendices. You may have slightly larger margins, but you may not have smaller ones. Do not justify the right margins of your text.

All page numbers should be centered three-quarters of an inch (¾”) above the bottom of the page. Page numbers are measured from the bottom of

the page to the bottom of the page number. Use a ruler if you are not sure if it is printing in the proper place.

The margins described above are used by most companies that bind theses, projects and dissertations. Although Graduate Studies no longer requires bound copies, some students wish to order bound copies for themselves. For purposes of binding, all material should be set within the margins noted above.

Paragraph Indentation

All paragraphs throughout the entire work are indented ½" (5 spaces on some word processing programs) from the left margin.

Pagination

In general, the pages preceding the first chapter of the manuscript should be numbered with a lowercase Roman numeral. Exceptions are the title page, committee page, and copyright page. The title and committee pages are counted, but no number appears on the pages themselves. The copyright and dedication pages are not counted or numbered. Thus, the first numbered page is the abstract; it should be numbered page iii. Continue numbering consecutively with lowercase Roman numerals throughout the pre-text pages. The pre-text pages are presented in the following order:

- Title Page (no page number)
- Committee Page (no page number)
- Copyright Page (no page number)

- Abstract (page iii)
- Acknowledgements (if included, use Roman numeral)
- Dedication (if included, no page number or Roman numeral)
- Table of Contents (use Roman numeral)
- List of Tables (if included, use Roman numeral)
- List of Figures (if included, use Roman numeral)
- List of Symbols, or other lists (if included, use Roman numeral)

The body of the work (chapters), all appendices, and references should be numbered with Arabic numerals consecutively throughout the manuscript (1, 2, 3, etc.). Chapter one should begin on page 1. In cases where a manual or handbook is included in the appendix, it must be numbered consecutively with the rest of the thesis/project/dissertation. All page numbers should be centered three-quarters of an inch (3/4") above the bottom of the page. (Use a ruler if you are not sure if it is printing in the proper place).

Formatting Pre-Text Pages/Front Matter

The pre-text pages are those that precede the first chapter. Sample pages are included in Appendix C: When copying the examples, pay close attention to capitalization, line breaks, and spacing. Templates are available on the [Graduate Studies website](#).

Title Page

The title page consists of four evenly spaced components, each of which

is separated from the next by a solid, horizontal division line two inches (2") long. The title page will be counted but will not be numbered at the bottom of the page nor listed in the table of contents.

Section 1: Title. The title of your thesis/project/dissertation should be typed in all capital letters one and one-quarter inch (1¼") down from the top of the page (at the top margin). If your title is longer than one line, double-space the title as shown in the example in Appendix C.

Section 2: Identification of the Type of Culminating Experience. Are you writing a thesis, project or dissertation? On the first line of this section, indicate which one you are completing. If you are unsure, contact your committee chair. Follow the exact format in the [sample title page in Appendix C](#).

Section 3: Identification of Your Degree Title. The third component lists your degree and the discipline. To determine the exact degree title and whether it is designated as a Master of Arts, Master of Science, etc. consult the *University Bulletin*.

You may also identify the option or concentration that you are completing. At the end of the last word in your degree title, place a colon (:). On the next line, identify the option as listed in the *University Bulletin*. Follow the format in the example in Appendix C.

Section 4: Author Name(s) and Graduation Date. The fourth component presents the full name of the author(s) and the month and year in which the degree will be granted. Following the model in Appendix C, list your FULL

name, as it will appear on your diploma. If there are multiple authors, place each author's name on a separate line.

On the line below your name, type the month and year you will graduate. Degrees are granted three times per year: December (fall graduation), May (spring graduation), and August (summer graduation). *Remember, the graduation date is not the month that you complete the manuscript.*

Committee Page

The committee page is like the title page except that the second half of the page will include the names of your committee members instead of the degree awarded. The committee page consists of three components and two dividing lines. Like the rest of the manuscript, the top and bottom margins of the committee page are one and one-quarter inches (1 ¼") and the left margin is one and one-half inches (1½"). The committee page is counted but is not numbered at the bottom of the page nor listed in the table of contents. Follow the model in Appendix C.

Section 1: Title . The title of your thesis/project/dissertation should be typed in all uppercase letters, beginning 1¼" down from the top of the page.

Make certain that the title on this page is exactly like the title on your Title Page in wording, punctuation, and line breaks.

Section 2: Thesis/Project/Dissertation Indication . On the first line of this section, indicate whether you are completing a thesis, project or dissertation.

Section 3: Author Name(s) and Graduation Date . Insert your full name on

line 2 of this section. Write your name exactly as it is written on the title page. If there are multiple authors, list each author's full name on a separate line. On the line below your name, insert the month and year you will graduate. **This is not the month that you complete the manuscript.** Degrees are granted in December, May, and August.

Section 4: Committee Members. Under the words "Approved by:" list your committee members, beginning with your committee chair. For example: John Smith, Committee Chair, Psychology. On the next double-spaced line below, list your committee member (Jane Doe, Committee Member). You do not need to repeat the department name unless your committee members are from different departments. Include all committee members – there are usually three. Some programs require that you also list the department chair or graduate program coordinator, others prefer to use a different designation, such as First Reader, Second Reader, instead of Committee Chair, Committee Member. For example, the School of Social Work uses the terms Faculty Supervisor and Research Coordinator. **Check with your program for the correct wording.** Examples are also available on the Graduate Studies website. The list of committee members should be centered on the page. See the example in Appendix C.

Copyright Page

The copyright page is not counted or numbered and is not listed in the table of contents. The top margin for this page is four inches (4"), and the

copyright notice is centered between the left and right margins. Use one of the following formats: “© 2023 Maria McLeod Mason” or “Copyright 2023 Maria McLeod Mason”. Use your full name, as it appears on the title page in your manuscript. See the Graduate Studies [formatting templates](#).

For published works, the law provides that a copyright notice in a specified form “shall be placed on all publicly distributed copies from which the work can be visually perceived.” Use of the copyright notice is the responsibility of the copyright owner and does not require advance permission from the Copyright Office. For further information about copyright registration, notice, or special questions relating to copyright problems, visit www.copyright.gov

Abstract

The thesis/project/dissertation MUST include an abstract. The abstract page should have only one heading: ABSTRACT. Type the word “ABSTRACT” in all capital letters, 1¼” down from the top of the page, centered within the required margins.

The abstract should contain all the essential information about the thesis/project/dissertation and provide the reader with an overview of the study. It should be written in complete sentences and include statements of the research problems, procedure, design or methods, results or major findings, and conclusions. The abstract should include accomplishments, the most pertinent facts and implications of the study, and a brief explanation of the work. The abstract should be concise and clearly written and generally should not exceed

250 words (approximately 1½ pages in length). Mathematical formulae, diagrams, footnotes, illustrative materials, quotations, citations and references should not be used in the abstract. The abstract page is listed in the table of contents.

Acknowledgments Page

Here you may recognize specific contributions by other persons or institutions, especially if financial support was received. It is also customary to recognize the assistance of the graduate committee and/or graduate coordinator. The acknowledgements page is optional.

The acknowledgment page has only one heading, the word “ACKNOWLEDGMENTS” typed in all capital letters. The page should be numbered at the bottom with a lowercase Roman numeral and listed in the table of contents.

Dedication Page

Dedications are optional and are usually brief and need not include the word “dedicated.” The word “To” is sufficient, as in “To Gerald.”

The dedication page is not listed in the table of contents. No number appears on its page, and the page is not counted in the pagination of the pre-text pages. The dedication page must adhere to all margin, font and spacing requirements.

Table of Contents

The heading “TABLE OF CONTENTS” should appear in all capital letters

1¼” down from the top of the page. The table of contents has four major sections: pre-text pages, body of text (chapters or statement of purpose), appendices, and bibliography/references. See the example in Appendix C. All page numbers in the table of contents should be right justified at the right margin. The leader dots (series of dots and spaces) leading from the headings to the page numbers should either extend all the way to the page numbers or line up vertically before them. There should be at least three dots between the last word in the title and the page number. Headings and titles that are more than one line should be single-spaced. Chapter titles and headings should not be in bold type. Do not use the ampersand (&); spell out the word "and".

Pre-text Pages in the Table of Contents. The only pre-text pages listed in the table of contents are the “ABSTRACT” page, “ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS” page, and the “LISTS” pages, (e.g. LIST OF TABLES, LIST OF FIGURES, etc.) in all capital letters. These entries should be flush with the left margin; double spacing between each entry.

Chapters and Headings in the Table of Contents. List all chapters and first level (centered) headings in your manuscript. On the left margin, type the word “CHAPTER ONE” in all capital letters followed by a colon (:) and the title of the chapter; the chapter titles should also be in all capital letters. If the chapter title is too long to fit on one line, single space the carry-over line and line it up directly beneath the first letter in the first line of the title. Number each chapter consecutively, spelling out the number (e.g. “CHAPTER ONE,” “CHAPTER

TWO,” “CHAPTER THREE,” etc.).

After you list the chapter, list the first-level headings (those that are centered in the text). First-level headings should be indented ½ inch from the left margin. Double-space between each new heading you list. Headings should not be typed in all capital letters; instead, only capitalize the first letter of each major word. If a heading is too long to fit on one line, single space the carry-over line.

Only first-level headings are required to be listed.

Follow the same guidelines for listing the second and third level headings, but indent each an additional half-inch from the left margin to indicate their level in the text. Therefore, second level headings would be indented one (1) inch, and third-level headings would be indented one and a half (1.5) inches.

Be consistent in listing headings. For example, if you list one second-level heading you must list all second-level headings. It is either all or none of a level.

All titles and headings in the table of contents must be exactly like those in the text in wording, spelling and capitalization.

Appendices in Table of Contents. In the table of contents, appendices are listed BEFORE the references (or bibliography). Each appendix should be titled “APPENDIX” in capital letters. If you have more than one appendix, each must be assigned a capital letter (e.g. “APPENDIX A”, “APPENDIX B”, “APPENDIX C”, etc.). If the appendix includes a title, include the title in the table of contents as well, in all capital letters (e.g. “APPENDIX A: MAPS”). Remember,

all titles of appendices in the table of contents must be exactly like those in the text in wording, spelling and capitalization and must be listed in the order in which they appear in the text.

Bibliography/References in Table of Contents . The last entry of the Table of Contents is the heading “BIBLIOGRAPHY, or “REFERENCES,” or “WORKS CITED,” typed in all capital letters.

Format for List of Tables

The List of Tables follows the Table of Contents on a new page and is numbered with a lowercase Roman numeral. A List of Tables is only used when tables appear in the main body of the text. Tables located in the appendices are not included in the List of Tables.

The title, “LIST OF TABLES,” falls 1¼” down from the top of the page and the page is formatted as shown in the example in Appendix C. Table titles should begin with the word “Table” and are numbered sequentially in the order in which they appear in the text. A period usually separates the table number and table title. Single-space titles too long for one line. Double space between titles.

Narrative which follows a table title should not be included with the title (notes, citations, explanations).

All page numbers in the List of Tables should be right justified at the right margin. Dot leaders should run from the last word in the table title to the page number. At least three dots should be left between the table title and the page number. See the example in Appendix C.

Format for List of Figures

The List of Figures follows the List of Tables and uses the same format. A List of Figures is only included when figures appear in the main body of the text. Figures in the appendices do not need to be listed. The title, "LIST OF FIGURES" falls 1¼" down from the top of the page and the page is formatted like the List of Tables. Figure titles should begin with the word "Figure" and the figure number. A period separates the figure number and title (Figure 1. Figure Title). The List of Figures should be double-spaced, as is the rest of your manuscript. Single-space titles too long for one line. At least three dots should be left between the end of the last word in the title or caption and the page number.

All page numbers in the List of Figures should be right justified at the right margin. Dot leaders should run from the last word in the figure title to the page number.

Format for Body of Manuscript

The body of the text explains, illustrates, argues for, and in some cases proves by organizing in a coherent manner the evidence gathered from various sources. The manuscript will usually be divided into several chapters, some or all of which may be prescribed by the department. The text should be clear, accurate, and written in an academic, scholarly style. The presentation of the manuscript is nearly as important as the research; take time to edit and proofread the final copy of the work carefully.

As mentioned, manuscripts should be typed double-spaced in Arial 12-point font. The same font is used throughout the manuscript – headings, chapter titles, page numbers, table of contents, etc. should be in Arial, 12 point font. The first lines of paragraphs should be indented ½ inch, or five spaces. The margins throughout the manuscript should be as follows: left margin, one and one-half inches (1½”); right margin, one inch (1”); top and bottom margins, one and one fourth inches (1¼”). Pages should be set up to print single-sided, not double-sided.

Chapter Titles and Headings

Chapter titles and headings should follow the format described in this handbook. Headings are not required, but when they are used, all headings of equal importance should be formatted the same way and follow a consistent order from chapter to chapter. First level headings should always come first.

Chapter Titles

Begin each chapter on a new page. Place the word “CHAPTER” and the chapter number at the top of the page and the chapter title one double-spaced line below this. The chapter number is spelled out (e.g. ONE, TWO, THREE, etc.), and chapter titles and numbers are always in all capital letters, centered over the body of the text. If the title exceeds one line, double-space and center all additional lines. Chapter titles should not be in bold type. See the examples in Appendix C.

Headings

Headings are not required, but they may help organize your work by dividing it into topics and subtopics. The most commonly used headings are the centered heading (first level or main heading) and the flush-left heading or free-standing side-head (second level or subheading). Some authors break things down further with sub-subheadings by using the paragraph heading or paragraph side-head (third level). These are demonstrated in the examples below. In some works, the number of levels of headings required may vary from chapter to chapter, but when headings are used within chapters, main headings/first-level headings should be used first. See the heading formatting examples below. Headings should not be in bold type.

NOTE: Abbreviations and acronyms should not be used in any headings or titles unless they are part of the standard nomenclature in the field.

Heading Examples

Centered Heading (First Level)

As seen here, the first heading (the most general one) is centered within the margins, not underlined, and only the first letter of each major word is capitalized. Place an extra double-spaced line before/above centered headings that do not begin at the top of the page. Text should follow on the next double spaced line below the heading. If the title is lengthy, divide it into two or more

lines and single space (see below).

Example of a Long Centered Heading with Additional Lines Single Spaced Below

When a heading falls near the bottom of the page, it should be followed by at least one line. If there is not room, move the heading to the next page.

Flush-left Heading (Second Level)

The second-level heading shown above, (called a flush-left heading or a free-standing side-head), is a subheading. It is used after a main heading to divide a main topic into subtopics. The second-level heading is set flush with the left margin, underlined, and only the first letter of each major word is capitalized. Do not add additional space above the heading. If the title is longer than one line, all carry-over lines should be single-spaced.

Paragraph Heading (Third Level). The third level heading is called a paragraph heading or a paragraph side-head. It is used after a second-level heading to narrow down your topic. This heading is indented the same as the first line of a paragraph ($\frac{1}{2}$ "), is underlined, and ends with a period. The first letter of each major word in the heading is capitalized.

Additional Levels of Headings. For all subsequent levels of headings, you may refer to the style guide in your field, or you may format additional levels the same as the paragraph heading with an additional $\frac{1}{2}$ " indentation for each additional level.

Additional Formatting Matters

Epigraphs

When used as the heads of chapters, epigraphs are blocked on the right half or two-thirds of the page, and they are not enclosed in the quotation marks. They may be typed in italics. The author of the quotation and title of the work are given below the epigraph, flush right. A full citation should be included in the list of references or works cited.

Lists

All numbered or bulleted lists are indented ½” from the left-hand margin and double spaced.

- Any carry-over lines should line up with the first word in the first line of text in the listing.
- Listings may be preceded by numbers, dashes, bullets, or other embellishments.
 - Second-level listings (i.e. listings within listings) are indented 1” from the left-hand margin for the first line with all carryover lines lining up with the first word in the first line of text in the second-level listing.

Block Quotations

When formatting long quotations, follow the style guide for your program. If you are using APA format, block quotations that are 40 words or more should be indented ½” from the left margin. If using MLA format, direct quotations which are four or more lines in length are presented as block quotations and

indented 1” from the left margin. Block quotations are usually double spaced; check with the style guide for your field. If the quoted material begins mid-sentence, a series of three ellipsis points, each separated by one blank space should precede the material (for example “. . . that the entire system is growing”). Do not use quotation marks around block quotations as the process of blocking indicates that the material is a direct quotation. Unlike in-text quotations, for block quotations, all reference citation material falls outside of the closing punctuation.

Tables

Numerical results of research are frequently presented in tabular form. Some programs require students to follow the programs’ style manual for creating tables.

Placement of Tables within Text

You may place your tables in an appendix or in the text. All tables should include a table number and title, placed directly above the table. Tables placed within the text should be numbered consecutively. All tables are numbered in Arabic numerals, and all references should be by this number [e.g., (see Table 5)]. Each table should be placed as close to the first reference to it as possible. However, the table should not be placed in the middle of a sentence, breaking up the text. Leave two double-spaces (four blank lines) above and below each table to set it off from the rest of the text.

If the table is placed on the page following the original reference, it is placed at the top of the page either by itself or, if space remains, with text filling in the balance of the page.

The title for each table appears at the top and all source material and /or notes are placed on the bottom. If there is not enough room for both the table and the reference material on the same page, continue the text and insert the table and any corresponding reference material together on the next page. If necessary, the font used in tables may be reduced to 10 points. At least two double spaces (4 blank lines) should separate two consecutive tables.

NOTE: If the material has been reproduced or adapted from another source, a full reference citation, exactly as appears in the list of references at the end of the work, must follow.

Figures

All figures, illustrations, photographs, maps, diagrams, and similar presentations must be professional quality. Graphs and diagrams may be created through computer graphics programs.

NOTE: If the material has been reproduced or adapted from another source, a full reference citation, identical to the one in the list of references at the end of the work, must fall below the figure caption.

Placement of Figures within Text

You may choose to place your figures in an appendix or in the body of your text. Check your program's style manual for the format of figure titles. If your program does not require a specific style for figure titles, make sure to format them consistently throughout your manuscript. Figures are usually labeled at the bottom and the caption should not exceed the width of the figure. All figures are numbered in Arabic numerals, and all references should be by this number [e.g., (see Figure 5)]. Figures, illustrations, graphs and the like that are placed within the text must be inserted as close to the first reference as possible and numbered in Arabic numbers in the sequence in which they appear in the text. However, do not insert a figure so that it breaks up the text in the middle of a sentence.

Place two double spaces above and below figures, graphs, and so forth, when inserting this material in the text. Eight to ten blank lines should be left between two consecutive figures whenever they appear on the same page without intervening text. Large figures may be placed on a separate page. If figures are to be placed horizontally (called "landscape" in most software programs) the page number must appear at the bottom of the page, centered, and measuring $\frac{3}{4}$ from the bottom of the page to the bottom of the page number.

Additional Materials and Supplemental Files

All materials, such as maps, illustrations, figures, etc. must fit within the

margins. Items which cannot be reduced can be included in ScholarWorks as supplemental files. Videos, websites, PowerPoint presentations, or other materials may also be submitted as supplemental files. **Please notify the Office of Graduate Studies if you wish to include supplemental files so we can enable this option for you.**

Appendices

An appendix contains material too detailed for inclusion in the body of the work. When diverse materials are included, create an appendix for each group of data (questionnaires, correspondence, figures, etc.). Appendices will vary in format, and a certain degree of freedom is allowable. The appendices must observe the margin requirements, but NOT the font, type size, or other requirements. This is where pictures, tables or other items can be placed; however, large items must be reduced to fit within the required margins.

Each appendix should be assigned a consecutive uppercase letter and title, (APPENDIX A: TABLES, APPENDIX B: FIGURES, APPENDIX C: SURVEYS, etc.) and listed as such in the table of contents. The appendix itself is preceded by a half-title page bearing its label and title in Arial 12-point type, in all capital letters. This label is placed 4" (about 8 double spaces) from the top of the page, with the title on the next double-spaced line, and centered between the margins. Appendix titles that are longer than one line should be double-spaced.

Appendices are paginated consecutively following the rest of the

thesis/project/dissertation. All page numbers are placed $\frac{3}{4}$ " from the bottom of the page in Arial, 12-point type.

Bibliography/References

The format for citing sources in a thesis/project/dissertation will be determined by the appropriate departmental style guide. In addition, the title of the reference section (for example, "REFERENCES," "BIBLIOGRAPHY" OR "REFERENCES CITED") is determined by the departmental style guide and should be typed in all capital letters and centered $1\frac{1}{4}$ " down from the top of the page. The same title appears in the table of contents. Double space between the title and the first entry in the list of references. References should be listed alphabetically unless the department style guide uses a different system.

Final Suggestions

The key to success in any graduate program is organization. Taking note of the deadlines and managing one's time within these confines results in a positive graduate experience. While some problems may not be of one's own making, remember that the Office of Graduate Studies and your program faculty are here to support you.

- Plan ahead. Keep a list of all deadlines in a convenient place and review them regularly. Remember, some of the steps required to meet a deadline take time. Committee members and graduate coordinators

have other commitments and will not always be available when needed.

Reviewing a manuscript may take two or more weeks.

- Keep informed. Ask questions of your graduate committee members, the graduate coordinator, and the Office of Graduate Studies. Read the Coyote Graduate Student Guidebook and the *University Bulletin* regularly to review deadlines and requirements.
- Remain in control. Remember, this is your graduate work; you are involved in an advanced level of study in which initiative and originality is expected. Discuss concerns with your committee members and with their input, resolve problems. Create a document you will be proud of for years to come.

APPENDIX A:
DEFINITION OF A THESIS

DEFINITION OF A THESIS

The State of California Education Code (Title V, Section 40510, p. 473) defines a thesis as

. . . the written product of a systematic study of a significant problem. It identifies the problem, states the major assumptions, explains the significance of the undertaking, sets forth the sources for and methods of gathering information, analyzes the data, and offers a conclusion or recommendation. The finished project [product] evidences originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate organization and format, and thorough documentation.

While the Code delineates the technical differences between a thesis and a project, at times there is a fine line between the two. A thesis is distinguished by certain elements such as an introduction to the study, a review of the literature, a methodology section, results, summary, and recommendations for further research, while a project may not have these components. There is also a difference between the elements found in a quantitative thesis versus those found in a non-quantitative (qualitative) thesis, thus some sections of this description may not apply, and the format should only be used as a guide and not an unyielding outline.

In general, the introduction should contain one or more hypotheses which establish the purpose(s) of the study and upon which theoretical and organizational plans for the study are based. The literature review should provide empirical evidence supporting the study and put the study in context with other research in the field. The methodology section explicitly describes how the research was conducted, including any statistical treatment. The results section reports and discusses the findings of the study and recommends areas for future research. The summary section is self-explanatory. A specific format may be found in the style manual appropriate to the academic area in which the thesis is written. Appendices, which include data, maps, and other material too detailed or bulky for inclusion in the body of the text, may be appended at the end.

It should be noted here that a distinction is made between a quantitative thesis, which usually involves the collection and statistical analyses of numerical data, and a non-quantitative thesis which does not. Thus, there are some portions of the thesis outline below which may not apply to all theses. The following explanation is offered as a guide.

Thesis Content

The framework of the thesis is built around the sections noted below. Your committee chair will assist you with organizing your thesis and may add or omit sections, if appropriate. The following is offered as a common outline and to elucidate what is to be included in the various sections.

Introduction to the Study

It is the primary function of the Introduction to introduce and give an overview of the study. The following components should be included in the Introduction:

Background. The beginning of the chapter should serve as a carefully organized lead-in to the problem under investigation. This section should include an overview of the historical evolution, the current status, the projected future dimensions of the problem, or all three.

Statement of the Problem. Present the focal point(s) of the research. Introduce the “what” of the present investigation (i.e., clearly state what the study will examine or investigate). State the specific major question(s) and/or hypothesis(es) to be studied or tested. Make a precise statement of all minor questions to be explored.

Purpose of the Study. Justify the study. Why is the present investigation significant? Explain how it supports other studies, differs from previous studies, extends present knowledge and/or examines new issues.

Theoretical Bases and Organization. How does the research correspond with other studies? What are the underlying theoretical bases upon which the study is constructed? One or more hypotheses should create the solid foundation upon which the conceptual framework is built.

Limitations of the Study. Discuss both content and methodological limitations of the investigation. How will the research work within or around these confines?

Definition of Terms. Define any special terms used in the study and establish abbreviations that will be used throughout the text.

Review of the Literature. There are several ways in which this chapter may be structured: chronologically, categorically, or through related theoretical viewpoints. Emphasis should be placed on the reasons underlying the particular areas, topics, and periods selected for review. The chapter should:

1. Provide evidence supporting the historical, theoretical, and research background for the study.
2. Define how the investigation differs from other studies in the field.
3. Show how the study relates to other research studies in similar areas.

Theoretical foundations, expert opinion, and actual research findings should be included. Primary sources should be used whenever possible.

Methodology

This chapter describes the research design or approach in depth. This should be a detailed and clearly written description which permits a precise replication of the study. Several parts of this chapter apply mainly to a quantitative thesis but may be appropriate to a non-quantitative thesis as well.

Design of the Investigation. Explain how the study is designed to investigate each question or hypothesis. If appropriate, identify all variables and how they are manipulated.

Population and/or Sample. Describe the principal characteristics of the population selected. If a random sample is used, describe the general population from which the sample was selected and the sampling procedure used.

Treatment. Describe the exact sequence followed to collect and tabulate the data. Describe the instrument(s) used to collect the data and establish the validity of the instrument(s) via studies by other researchers.

Data Analysis Procedures. Describe and explain data analysis procedures and/or statistical treatments used. Include descriptions of tests, formulae, computer programs, and procedures.

Results and Discussion

This section reports on and discusses the findings of the study.

Presentation of the Findings. The results of the investigation are presented in narrative form and may be supplemented with graphics.

Whenever appropriate, use tables and figures to present the data.

Discussion of the Findings. The discussion of the results should be well argued in relation to each question or hypothesis. Inferences, projections, and probable explanations of the results may also be included. Discuss the implications of patterns and trends and include any secondary findings.

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This concluding section should summarize the entire research effort. A sufficiently comprehensive overview should enable the intended audience to understand the entire study. At this point it is appropriate to reacquaint the reader with the conceptual framework, the design of the investigation, the methodology, and the results of the study. This section should include the significance of the study and its conclusions, the limitations and weaknesses of the study, implications for future research, and recommendations.

Appendices

Material too detailed for inclusion in the body of the text, or material which cannot be effectively presented due to its length or size may be included in the appendices. Appendices might include such things as questionnaires, raw data, maps, photos, artwork, letters of permission to reproduce material, Institutional Review Board approval, and personal correspondence.

Each appendix should be assigned a consecutive uppercase letter, and be titled APPENDIX A, APPENDIX B, APPENDIX C, etc., and include each appendix title as listed in the table of contents. The appendices must observe the margin requirements, but NOT the font, print, etc. This is where pictures, tables or items that are larger than the margins can be used and reduced to fit within the required margins.

References/Bibliography

Cite references according to the department style guide, and be sure to include every source cited in the study, including material which has been adapted for use in tables and figures.

APPENDIX B:
DEFINITION OF A PROJECT

DEFINITION OF A PROJECT

Introduction

In many departments, graduate students have the option of producing a project instead of the traditional research thesis. A project is defined by the State of California Education Code as:

. . . a significant undertaking appropriate to the fine and applied arts or to professional fields. It evidences originality and independent thinking, appropriate form and organization, and a rationale. It is described and summarized in a written abstract that includes the project's significance, objectives, methodology, and a conclusion or recommendation. (Title 5, Section 40510, p. 473)

Whereas a thesis is an empirical scholarly research study, a project is distinctly more creative in nature. Often, projects will be based on a compilation of comparative analysis of the works done by other researchers. Although such material provides the study with substance, culminating projects must evidence originality, critical thinking, and reflect the scholarly or artistic capability of the candidate. While requirements for various creative projects will vary, there will be certain elements common to each project.

Types of Projects

The type of project is limited only by the creativity, capability, and budget of the graduate student. The graduate thesis/project committee will be most concerned with the manner in which the material is researched, organized, developed, and presented. The content is more flexible for a project than for a thesis. Often, as in cases where the project is a manual or handbook, the project itself is placed in the appendix, while sections in the main body of the text are tailored to introduce, justify, and validate the study or creative effort.

Organization of the Project

Because of the uniqueness of projects, the introductory sections in the main body will vary in number. The following presents some of these sections and their respective elements commonly found in master's projects. This outline is only a recommendation and should be adapted as necessary. As a general rule, however, projects will contain at least some descriptive sections selected from the following.

Introduction to the Project

The primary function of this initial section is to provide a comprehensive overview of the project.

Purpose of the Project. A statement of the purpose of the project explains why the project was attempted. Include personal interest as well as other identified needs which the project will help satisfy. Why is the project significant?

Scope (Description) of the Project. Define what the project is in terms of content and format. Include specific information regarding the subject matter, the intended audience, how the project is to be used, and the results or effects expected.

Significance of the Project. Explain the significance of the project in the field of study. What new dimensions or concepts have been presented? Emphasize the importance of the project in its use of techniques and specify the intended effects. If the project is designed to be informational, persuasive, or instructional, specify the effects in terms of behavioral objectives.

Limitations of the Project. If applicable, present and discuss the content limitations with regard to resources, time, and so forth.

Definition of Terms. Define any special terms and establish standard abbreviations which will be used throughout the text.

Review of Related Literature

This section constitutes the major research effort of the project. It provides the source material for the content and puts the present project in context of existing information in the field. Review and cite related studies and discuss their strengths and weaknesses pertaining to the purpose of the project. Discuss the theories or techniques examined and their respective implications for the present study. Summarize the review with a synthesis of the literature identifying the various approaches and themes. This section ultimately justifies the need for the project.

Methodology

This chapter describes in depth how every aspect of the project was conducted, compiled, or created. It should be significantly detailed and should describe the format and technique used in presenting the material. Techniques, questionnaires, interviews, study sites, and material used to accomplish the study should be described here.

Results

There may or may not be a results section, depending on the type of project. If there are findings to report, they should be synthesized for inclusion in this section. Material too detailed to be included in the body of the text should be presented in the appendices.

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary. Present an overview of the previous sections and how the final project addresses issues which have been raised. Reacquaint the reader with the conceptual framework and the design of the study. Basically, this section summarizes the entire project effort.

Conclusions. Conclusions presented should validate both the need for the study and explain how the present study responded to that need.

Appendices

As a general rule, the project itself is placed in Appendix A. This will allow more freedom in the format of the work. In addition, material too detailed for

inclusion in the body of the text may be placed in the appendices.

References/Bibliography

Cite references according to the department style guide, and be sure to include every source cited in the study, including material which has been adapted for use in tables and figures.

APPENDIX C:
SAMPLE PAGES

SAMPLE TITLE PAGE: TITLE WILL APPEAR HERE,
SECOND LINE IS DOUBLE SPACED

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
English and Writing Studies:
Pedagogy

by
Sally Anne Harris
June 2023

SAMPLE COMMITTEE PAGE FOR MOST PROGRAMS

SECOND LINE (IF NEEDED) GOES HERE



A <Thesis/Project>

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino



by

<Insert Full Name Here>

<Insert Graduation Date>

Approved by:

John Smith, Committee Chair, Psychology

John Smith, Committee Member

John Smith, Committee Member

SAMPLE COMMITTEE PAGE FOR SOCIAL WORK

SECOND LINE (IF NEEDED) GOES HERE

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

by
<Insert Full Name Here>
<Insert Graduation Date>

Approved by:

John Smith, Faculty Supervisor, Social Work

John Smith, M.S.W. Research Coordinator

SAMPLE COMMITTEE PAGE FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

SECOND LINE (IF NEEDED) GOES HERE

A <Thesis/Project>

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

by

<Insert Full Name Here>

<Insert Graduation Date>

Approved by:

John Smith, Committee Chair, Psychology

John Smith, Committee Member, English

John Smith, Committee Member, Theatre Arts

SAMPLE COMMITTEE PAGE FOR EDUCATION PROGRAMS

A <Thesis/Project>
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

by
<Insert Full Name Here>
<Insert Graduation Date>

Approved by:

John Smith, First Reader

John Smith, Second Reader

PLEASE PLACE THE TITLE OF YOUR DISSERTATION HERE
INVERTED PYRAMID IF LONGER THAN 5"

A Dissertation
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education
in
Educational Leadership

by
Thomas Andrew Smith
December 2023

Sample Table of Contents

The sample table of contents provided on the next page is meant to assist you in formatting your own table of contents. It is not designed to dictate the content of your chapter titles and headings; their content is determined by the subject matter of your thesis/project/dissertation. You may choose to create your table of contents automatically using the automated table of contents feature in Microsoft Word. If so, please keep in mind that you are still required to follow the University's formatting guidelines in this handbook.

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Sample Lists of Tables and Figures

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Sample Text and Appendix Title Page

The following pages are an example of what the text, headings and appendix title page should look like in your thesis, project or dissertation. The type is Arial, 12 point, double-spaced throughout.

CHAPTER ONE:

CHAPTER TITLE GOES HERE

Centered Heading (First-Level)

This heading is centered, not underlined, and only the first letter of each major word is capitalized. Place two double spaces above all centered headings and one double space between the heading and the text. Long headings should be divided into two or more lines and single spaced.

Flush-left Heading (Second-Level)

Double space before and after all flush-left headings (free-standing side-heads). If the title exceeds the 5" limit, divide the title into the appropriate number of lines. All carry-over lines are single spaced. Capitalize the first letter of each major word in the title. Double space under the title, indent the paragraph ½", and begin the text.

Paragraph Heading. (Third-Level) This heading is placed at the beginning of a new paragraph and indented. The first letter of each major word in the heading is capitalized. The heading is underlined and followed by a period with new text beginning on the same line immediately after the heading.

Additional Levels of Headings. For all subsequent levels of headings, you may refer to the style guide in your field. Or you may format additional levels the same as the paragraph heading with an additional ½" indentation for each additional level.

APPENDIX A:

SAMPLE APPENDIX TITLE PAGE: INSERT

APPENDIX TITLE HERE

APPENDIX D:
STATE OF CALIFORNIA EDUCATION CODE
(TITLE V, SECTION 40510)

State of California Education Code

(Title V, Section 40510)

5 CA ADC § 40510

§ 40510. The Master's Degree.

5 CCR § 40510

Barclays Official California Code of Regulations Title 5. Education
Division 5. Board of Trustees of the California State Universities Chapter 1.

California State University

Subchapter 2. Educational Program Graduate Degrees

§ 40510. The Master's Degree.

To be eligible for the Master's degree, the candidate shall have completed the following minimum requirements:

- (a) Advancement to Candidacy. For advancement to candidacy for the Master's degree, the applicant shall meet the requirements of Section 41011, and such particular requirements as the Chancellor and the campus may prescribe.
- (b) Requirements for the Degree.
 - (1) The completion of a specified pattern of study approved by the appropriate campus authority.
 - (2) A minimum of thirty semester units of approved graduate work completed within a maximum time to be established by each campus. Such maximum time shall be no more than seven years nor less than five years for each particular program. An extension of time beyond the limit may be granted by appropriate campus authority if warranted by individual circumstances and if the outdated work is validated by examination, in the relevant additional

course or subject field of work or such other demonstration of competence as may be prescribed. In the degree program:

(A) Not less than 21 semester units (32 quarter units) shall be completed in residence. The appropriate campus authority may authorize the substitution of credit earned by alternate means for a part of this residence requirement.

(B) Not less than one-half of the units required for the degree shall be in courses organized primarily for graduate students.

(C) Not more than six semester units shall be allowed for a thesis or project.

(3) Satisfactory completion of a thesis, project, or comprehensive examination, defined as follows:

(A) A thesis is the written product of a systematic study of a significant problem. It identifies the problem, states the major assumptions, explains the significance of the undertaking, sets forth the sources for and methods of gathering information, analyzes the data, and offers a conclusion or recommendation. The finished product evidences originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate organization and format, and thorough documentation. Normally, an oral defense of the thesis is required.

(B) A project is a significant undertaking appropriate to the fine and applied arts or to professional fields. It evidences originality and independent thinking, appropriate form and organization, and a rationale. It is described and summarized in a written abstract that includes the project's significance, objectives, methodology and a conclusion or recommendation. An oral defense of the project may be required.

(C) A comprehensive examination is an assessment of the student's ability to integrate the knowledge of the area, show critical and independent thinking, and demonstrate mastery of the subject matter. The results of the examination evidences independent thinking, appropriate organization, critical analysis and accuracy of documentation. A record of the examination questions and responses shall be maintained in accordance with the

records retention policy of The California State University.

- (4) A grade point average of 3.0 (grade of B) or better in all courses taken to satisfy the requirements for the degree, except that a course in which no letter grade is assigned shall not be used in computing the grade point average.

Note: Authority cited: Sections 66600, 89030 and 89035, Education

Code. Reference: Section 89030, Education Code.

HISTORY

1. New Article 7 (Section 40510) filed 4-29-77; effective thirtieth day thereafter (Register 77, No. 18).
2. Amendment of NOTE filed 3-19-82; effective thirtieth day thereafter (Register 82, No. 12).
3. Amendment filed 1-12-83; effective thirtieth day thereafter (Register 83, No. 3)