GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF MASTER'S THESES
Murray State University
Effective Fall 2011 Semester

The individual student is responsible for fulfilling all university requirements for the preparation and submission of the thesis. It is also the responsibility of the student and/or thesis advisor to monitor the approval and submission process. These guidelines provide information helpful in the preparation of the thesis and describe certain formal requirements to which the thesis writer should adhere. Failure to follow these requirements may jeopardize the planned completion date of the degree. Any questions about the guidelines should be directed to the departmental and/or collegiate graduate coordinator.

Selection and Appointment of the Thesis Committee

The student should consult with a professor in the area of specialization and discuss the general topic of the proposed thesis. Upon mutual agreement, and subject to departmental policies, this professor will serve as the Thesis Advisor.

Subject to specific departmental policies and procedures, the thesis advisor will meet with the department chair in order to select members of the thesis committee. The minimum size of the committee, including the thesis advisor, shall be three members. A list of thesis committee members shall be kept in the student's departmental file. Subsequent changes to the committee's membership will be governed by departmental and/or collegiate policies.

Thesis Proposal

Prior to conducting studies that involve human subjects, the individual student must receive approval for his/her activities from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) following the current Procedures and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects. Students involved with research involving animals should obtain permission from the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Please consult your thesis advisor for details on either requirement. Failure to receive the appropriate approval may result in the disqualification of the thesis.

Writing the Thesis

- The student shall write the thesis under the guidance of the Thesis Advisor.
- The student may seek guidance from other committee members as needed.
- Style and Form of the Thesis

    1. The department will determine the specific style manual to be followed in the writing of theses for that department.

    2. Students will be expected to adhere to the specifics of style and form contained in the department's adopted style manual. The Thesis Advisor is responsible for supervising this adherence and for reconciling any potential conflicts between the style manual and MSU thesis guidelines.

    3. Brief quotations from another source do not require copyright permission under the "fair use" doctrine. Should the quotation exceed the "fair use" of the work, you must obtain permission from the copyright owner. In determining whether the use exceeds the "fair use" doctrine one must consider the nature of the copyrighted work, the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole, the effect of its use on the market or value of the quoted work, and whether the use of the copyrighted materials is for commercial or for non-profit educational purposes. IF IN DOUBT, OBTAIN PERMISSION.

Parts of the Thesis

Regardless of the style manual adopted by the department, the thesis should contain the following parts in the order listed:

A. First Fly Leaf (blank page)
B. Title Page (see Appendix I for specifics)
C. Signature Page (see Appendix II for sample)
D. Acknowledgements (optional)
E. Abstract (unpaged)
F. Preface (optional)
G. Table of Contents
H. List of Illustrations (if applicable)
I. Text (divided by chapters, if applicable)
J. Appendices (to include IRB/IACUC approval letter if applicable)
K. Bibliography
L. Last Fly Leaf (blank page)

Production

- The thesis should be produced on a word processor using standard serif fonts such as Times New Roman or Century; if desired, sans serif fonts such as Arial may be used for headings. Any fonts used must be clear, consistent, and easily readable with a font size of 12.
- Text should generally be double-spaced, though single- and/or triple-spacing may be employed consistent with the adopted style manual (e.g., for long quotations, bibliography, etc.).
- Top, bottom, and right margins must be one inch and the left margin 1.5 inches for binding. A two-inch top margin should begin the first page of each text chapter.
- Page numbers should be placed 1/2 inch from the top and 1 inch from the edge of the upper right corner of the page. Preliminary pages to the actual text are numbered in lower-case Roman numerals. The title and signature pages are not numbered, but are considered as numbers one and two in the page series. Consequently, the next page (usually acknowledgements) is numbered iii, the next iv, and so forth. The actual text and following parts of the thesis are assigned Arabic numerals beginning with 1 and continuing to the last page.
- Illustrative Materials
    1. Special care should be taken in the preparation of tables, charts, pictures, graphs, or similar illustrations. Illustrative material must be very sharp, dark, and clear for reproduction.
    2. Photographs and similar illustrative materials should be scanned into the document in compliance with copyright laws.
    3. If circumstances force the external attachment of such materials, archival quality materials and adhesives should be used.
    4. The student must obtain and pay for any and all permissions required for printing and reprinting copyrighted or otherwise controlled material in the thesis prior to its inclusion and make available copies of all such permissions to the Thesis Committee upon request.

For information on the Routing Process and Reproduction of the Thesis, **refer to** www.murraystate.edu/finishyourthesis.

Appendix I: Sample Title Page

TITLE OF THE THESIS ALL IN CAPS

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department (or School) of [insert discipline]
Murray State University
Murray, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
of [Insert specific name of degree]

by [Insert full name of student]
[Insert month and year degree granted]

Appendix II: Sample Signature Page

TITLE OF THESIS ALL IN CAPS

DATE APPROVED: _____
[By Thesis Committee – added by thesis advisor]

_____
Thesis Advisor

_____
Member, Thesis Committee

_____
Member, Thesis Committee

_____
Member, Thesis Committee

_____
Member, Thesis Committee

(Use appropriate number of signature lines
for your number of committee members.)

_____
Collegiate/School Graduate Coordinator

_____
Dean of the College/School

_____
University Graduate Coordinator

_____
Provost

Appendix III: Sample Table of Contents

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