

GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE MASTER'S THESIS

Murray State University

Effective Fall 2005

The individual student is responsible for fulfilling all university requirements for the preparation and submission of the thesis. These guidelines provide information helpful in the preparation of the thesis and describe certain formal requirements to which the thesis writer must adhere. Failure to follow these requirements may jeopardize the planned completion date of the degree.

I. Selection and Appointment of the Thesis Committee

- A. The student must 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.
- B. 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.

C. The Department Chair will forward the names of the Thesis Committee to the Dean of the College (or Collegiate Graduate Coordinator) for review and approval. After endorsement, the college will forward the makeup of the Thesis Committee to the Graduate Admissions Office. Subsequent changes to the committee's membership will be governed by departmental and/or collegiate policies.

II. Thesis Proposal

For studies that involve human subjects, the individual student must receive approval for his/her activities from the Institutional Review Board following the current Procedures and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects.

Failure to receive this approval may result in the disqualification of the thesis.

III. Writing the Thesis

- A. The student shall write the thesis under the guidance of the Thesis Advisor.
- B. The student may seek guidance from other committee members as needed.
- C. 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. The department will notify the Graduate Admissions Office of the style manual adopted.
 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.

IV. 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 approval letter if applicable)
- K. Bibliography
- L. Last Fly Leaf (blank page)

V. Production

- A. 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 and easily readable with a font size of at least 11.
- B. 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.).
- C. Final printing must be done on a laser or high-quality ink jet printer; dot matrix printing is not acceptable.
- D. The original and all copies must be submitted on at least 25% rag content, 20-pound, 8.5-by-11 inches white bond paper.
- E. 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.
- F. Page numbers should be placed inch from the top and 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 continuously to the last page, except that a page number will not appear on any page with a major heading (e.g., the first page of a chapter, the bibliography, etc.); however, a number in series should be allowed for such pages.

G. 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.

VI. Reproduction of the Thesis

- A. The student is responsible for either printing five copies of the thesis or having the original copy reproduced four times.
- B. All copies should be clean, clear, and straight. Students may carefully make these copies themselves, or may use agencies such as University Printing Services, Copy Express, or commercial printing firms. If such services are used, care should be taken to allow enough time for reproduction before the date of graduation (see deadlines below).

VII. Copies Required

- A. The Graduate Admissions Office requires five unbound copies – the original plus four clear copies.
- B. Distribution of bound copies: Original and one copy to MSU Libraries; one copy to student's department; one copy to relevant dean; one copy to student. Additional bound copies may be made at the student's expense.
- C. Submission Deadlines
 1. Two weeks prior to the anticipated date of graduation (i.e., the day the degree is to be conferred) the relevant department chair

other notifies the Dean of the College that the thesis and all departmental requirements for the degree have been completed.

At that time, the original copy of the thesis should be signed by the Thesis Committee and forwarded to the Collegiate Graduate Coordinator and/or Dean.

2. One week prior to the anticipated date of graduation the dean notifies the Graduate Admissions Office, in writing, that the thesis and all other requirements for the degree have been completed.

At

that time, the original and four copies of the thesis are to be submitted in unbound form to the Graduate Admissions Office on the first floor of Sparks Hall. A receipt for the binding fee must accompany these copies of the thesis; the binding fee is paid in the Cashier's Office on the second floor of Sparks Hall.

Appendix 1: Sample Title Page

TITLE OF THE THESIS ALL IN CAPS

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department 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 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

Collegiate Graduate Coordinator

Dean of the College

University Graduate Studies Coordinator

Provost