



**GRADUATE SCHOOL**  
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT LITTLE ROCK

# Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines

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## Guideline Editors

Dr. Karen M. Kuralt | Associate Dean of the Graduate School  
[kmkuralt@ualr.edu](mailto:kmkuralt@ualr.edu)

Ms. Chloe Moses, MA | Graduate Enrollment Management Specialist  
[cdmoses@ualr.edu](mailto:cdmoses@ualr.edu)

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## INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on reaching the thesis or dissertation stage in your graduate degree! These guidelines explain what you need to know to complete the thesis or dissertation process successfully from start to finish.

The topic and content of your thesis or dissertation should be established in a collaborative discussion between you, your faculty advisor, and your graduate advisory committee. Requirements for your topic, content, and research process are usually outlined and approved when you defend your thesis or dissertation proposal. Be sure to read our [UA Little Rock Dissertation and Thesis Responsibilities](#) document for more information about what is expected of you as a thesis or dissertation student and for guidelines on how to interact with your committee members.

The table below shows the steps to complete your thesis or dissertation and graduate with your degree. More details about forms you need to complete and the university's formatting requirements are included after the table.

**Table 1: Steps to complete your thesis or dissertation manuscript and graduate**

Steps to Complete	When to Complete	Additional Info and Links
Use a UA Little Rock approved formatting template to begin creating your thesis or dissertation manuscript	During the writing of your thesis or dissertation proposal or immediately after your proposal defense	<a href="#">UA Little Rock formatting templates and videos</a>
Apply for graduation	Early in the semester you intend to graduate	<a href="#">UA Little Rock instructions for applying to graduate</a>
Schedule your thesis or dissertation defense	At least 2-4 weeks before the manuscript deadline (see dates below)	Defenses can only be scheduled with the approval of your chair and advisory committee.
Submit a PDF of your defended thesis or dissertation to the Graduate School	<b>Fall:</b> December 1 by 5 pm <b>Spring:</b> May 1 by 5 pm <b>Summer:</b> August 1 by 5 pm	Use the <a href="#">Thesis and Dissertation Manuscript Submission</a> form
Upload a revised PDF of your thesis or dissertation to ProQuest	After making formatting changes required by the Graduate School	<a href="#">ProQuest upload link</a>  ProQuest instructions link (coming soon)
Submit revised PDFs to ProQuest	After making additional changes required by the Graduate School or your committee chair.	

## Avoiding plagiarism in your thesis or dissertation

Theses and dissertations are intended to demonstrate your ability to conduct scholarly investigation at an advanced level. They show that you can make unique connections and discoveries within your field. Because these projects showcase your original work and how it connects to the work of other researchers, it is expected that you will indicate clearly in your manuscript which ideas are your own and which ideas or contributions came from other people.

**Whenever you use the exact words** of another author, speaker, or publication, those words must be contained in quotation marks and the source must be cited. **Each time you summarize or paraphrase** the words and ideas of another author, speaker, or publication (even if you change or rearrange some words), you must give credit to the source of those words and ideas by citing them correctly.

**If you use someone's words and ideas without appropriate citation, this is considered plagiarism.** Plagiarism is an academic offense at UA Little Rock that will result in disciplinary action, so you should avoid it at all costs. If you aren't sure whether you need to cite a source or how to incorporate information from a source correctly, please consult with your advisor, the University Writing Center, or the Graduate School. For more information on how to quote, paraphrase, and summarize sources correctly, visit <https://ualr.edu/writingcenter/plagiarism/>.

If you are using your own published work as a chapter in your thesis or dissertation, you should clearly state this in the Acknowledgements section, giving proper credit to the journal in which your work appeared. Similarly if you make reference to your previously published work in the manuscript, those works should appear in your bibliography or works cited.

## REQUIRED FORMS

### I. Committee forms

Once your thesis or dissertation committee members are chosen, some programs require a hard copy (paper) form signed by the committee members confirming they have agreed to work with you on your research. Check with your program coordinator to find out whether you need to submit a signed form from your committee.

Your program coordinator or their designated representative will then use UA Little Rock's Argos online interface to

- Record the members of a committee when it is initially formed
- Add or delete members if they change over time
- Submit the approval form after the thesis or dissertation has been successfully defended

Program coordinators should consult with the Graduate School Associate Dean (Dr. Karen Kuralt, [kmkuralt@ualr.edu](mailto:kmkuralt@ualr.edu)) if they need help with submitting forms in Argos.

## II. Protocol approval forms and letters

If you are conducting surveys, interviews, experiments, etc. involving human subjects or animals, you must contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) **before starting your research.**

- **Research involving human subjects** must be reviewed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). As a researcher, you do not get to decide whether your methods are exempt from review; you are required to submit your research protocol in advance regardless, and the IRB will send you a letter indicating whether your protocol is approved, requires revisions, or is exempt. For a detailed description of how to request an IRB review of your research protocol, visit <https://ualr.edu/irb>.
- **Research involving animals** must be reviewed by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and must follow the [Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals](#). For more information about submitting your protocol for IACUC review, email the UA Little Rock Research Compliance Officer, Dr. Melody Muldrow ([mlmuldrow@ualr.edu](mailto:mlmuldrow@ualr.edu)).
- **Research involving recombinant DNA, radioisotopes, pathogens, toxins, or other hazardous materials** must receive prior approval from the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC). For more information about submitting a protocol for IBC review, visit <https://ualr.edu/researchcompliance/home/ibc/> or contact the IBC chair, Dr. Nawab Ali ([nali@ualr.edu](mailto:nali@ualr.edu)).

If your project has been approved by the IRB, IACUC, EHSC, or RSC, **an official Protocol Approval Statement must be included in the thesis or dissertation** (see appropriate order in Table 2), listing the name of the project, committee name, approval date, and protocol number.

## III. UA Invention Disclosure Form (intellectual property)

**If your project involves an invention or idea that could be patented**, your faculty advisor must submit a UA Invention Disclosure Form to the UALR Patent and Copyright Committee. If you believe your ideas may be patentable, speak to your project advisor immediately about privacy issues. The circulation of your thesis or dissertation as well as your project defense can be affected pending the Committee's examination. For more information, visit <https://ualr.edu/techlaunch/home/for-inventors/disclosing-your-invention/>.

# FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS

## Discipline-specific style guides

In addition to following the UA Little Rock Dissertation and Thesis Guidelines, you should prepare your thesis or dissertation using a nationally recognized standard for style and citation, which differ widely amongst programs. Most programs at UA Little Rock will recommend a style manual for your discipline.

You may use the style manual suitable to your discipline as long as it complies with the format and content guidelines given in this publication. Only the most recent editions of style manuals should be used, and the style must be consistent throughout. If your style manual conflicts with the UA Little Rock Dissertation and Thesis Guidelines, the requirements of the university guidelines should be followed.

Below are links to some common discipline-specific style guides:

[Association for Computing Machinery \(ACM\)](#)

[American Medical Association \(AMA\)](#)

[American Psychological Association \(APA\)](#)

[American Society of Mechanical Engineers \(ASME\)](#)

[Chicago Manual of Style \(CMoS\)](#)

[Council of Science Editors \(CSE\)](#)

[Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers \(IEEE\)](#)

[Modern Language Association \(MLA\)](#)

You may use free reference management software, such as [Zotero](#) or [Mendeley](#), to keep track of your research sources and manage your citation and bibliography formatting.

## Using journal articles as chapters or sections

Some graduate students choose to include articles that have been or will be submitted to journals for publication as part of their thesis or dissertation. You may only use an article in your thesis or dissertation if you are the first author of each article submitted. If you have multiple individual articles serving as chapters, they may not all have the same internal structure. It is acceptable for each chapter to be presented in the style appropriate to the journal.

If any of your chapters are also journal articles, **you must include a preface before the body of the thesis/dissertation** stating to which journals the chapters have been submitted for publication. (A preface section before each chapter is not necessary.) See Table 2 for the proper placement of the preface section.

The requirements for margins, figures, tables, and the other elements covered in this guide apply to theses and dissertations that include journal articles. Reference sections should follow the style of the journal to which you submitted the article. Continuous pagination is required throughout the body of the manuscript — in other words, do not start your page numbers over again for each new chapter, and do not use page numbers from the journal if the article has been published.

## Margins

Left, right, top, and bottom margins must be 1 inch in all sections of the thesis or dissertation, including front matter and references.

## Paragraphs

- Paragraph formatting should be consistent throughout the document.
- New paragraphs should be indented.
- All text must be left justified (except for some front matter pages that require centering).

## Line spacing

**The following sections must be double spaced:**

- Abstract paragraph(s)
- Dedication
- Acknowledgments
- Table of contents
- List of figures
- The body of the manuscript

Single spacing may be used in the body of the manuscript for long quotations, captions, and text appearing in tables, graphs, charts, etc. It may also be used on parts of the title page.

Use our [example templates](#) to format your front matter pages correctly.

**The following sections must be single spaced:**

- Copyright page
- Fair use page
- Title section of the abstract page
- Footnotes or endnotes
- Bibliographic entries (references)

## Fonts and font sizes

Most theses and dissertations should use 1 or 2 fonts. If you choose to use two fonts, we recommend that you use a sans serif font for headings and a serif font for paragraphs.

### Examples of sans serif fonts

Arial  
Aptos  
Calibri  
Helvetica  
Oswald  
Roboto  
Tahoma  
Trebuchet  
Ubuntu  
Verdana

### Examples of serif fonts

Aptos Serif  
Cambria  
Century Schoolbook  
Courier New  
Garamond  
Georgia  
Merriweather  
Palatino  
Roboto Serif  
Times New Roman

No handwriting, cartoon, script, or ornamental fonts should be used unless the thesis or dissertation specifically discusses the subject of graphic design, art, or typography.

- Body text may be 10, 11, or 12 points in size.
- Headings may be between 12 and 16 points in size.
- Text in tables, figures, and captions may be between 8 points and 12 points in size.
- Italics may be used for special emphasis, words from languages other than English, and titles of books, magazines, journals, and newspapers.

## Charts, tables, illustrations, and photos

Charts, graphs, tables, illustrations, photos, and other illustrative material may be included in your manuscript in black and white or in color.

**All illustrative material must fit within the normal page margins (1 inch on all sides).**

If a chart, table, or illustration is too large to fit within these margins, it may be inserted in landscape orientation. Some tables and charts may be formatted to appear on multiple pages.

If your manuscript includes figures or illustrations, tables, symbols, abbreviations, and/or nomenclature, you must include a list of those materials after the table of contents. Each type of illustrative material should be listed on pages after the table of contents in the following order:

1. List of Figures or Illustrations
2. List of Tables
3. List of Symbols, Abbreviations, and Nomenclature



## Arrangement and numbering of pages

**Order of pages:** Each section of your thesis or dissertation must appear in a specific order, as shown in Table 2 below. If your manuscript does not contain one of the pages or sections marked as “optional,” skip it and go to the next page or section in order.

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**Table 2: Required arrangement and numbering of pages**

<b>Front matter pages —</b> All page numbers in upper right corner, lowercase Roman numerals		
Title page	required	no page number
Copyright, Fair Use, and Duplication	required	lowercase ii
Abstract	required	lowercase iii
Dedication/Acknowledgements	optional	
Protocol or IRB approval letter	required if applicable	
Table of Contents	required	
List of Figures	required if applicable	
List of Tables	required if applicable	
List of Symbols, Abbreviations, Nomenclature	required if applicable	

  

<b>Body text and end matter pages —</b> All page numbers in upper right corner, Arabic numerals		
Manuscript chapters	required	Ch. 1 starts on page 1
Endnotes	optional	Format using your discipline’s style guide
References	required if applicable	Format using your discipline’s style guide
Appendices	optional	List each appendix in table of contents

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### Table of contents requirements:

- Front matter pages that appear in the manuscript **prior** to the table of contents **should not** be listed in the table of contents.
- All front matter pages **after** the table of contents should be included.
- The table of contents must include the chapter number and title of each chapter in the manuscript and any major headings within those chapters.
- All end matter sections (references, endnotes, appendices, etc.) must be included in the table of contents.

## Page numbers:

- The title page should not have a page number on it.
- All page numbers after the title page should be placed in the upper right corner at least half an inch from the top of the page.
- All front matter sections should be numbered in lowercase Roman numerals, starting with ii on the copyright/fair use page.
- The body of the manuscript and all end matter sections should be numbered consecutively using Arabic numerals, starting with 1 on the first page of chapter 1.

## Templates for formatting your manuscript

The Graduate School offers digital templates you can use as starting points for formatting your manuscript. You are responsible for making any changes to the template (adding and deleting text and/or manuscript sections) as needed for your specific project.

Regardless of which template you use, **the manuscript that you submit to the Graduate School and upload to the ProQuest database must be saved as a PDF.**

For help with using these templates, please contact the UA Little Rock Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Supervisor, Ms. Chloe Moses, at [cdmoses@ualr.edu](mailto:cdmoses@ualr.edu).

- [Microsoft Word 365 format](#)
- [Google Doc format](#)
- [Pages format](#) (Apple OS)
- [LaTeX format](#)

## APPLYING FOR GRADUATION

You are responsible for submitting your graduation application in BOSS early in the semester you are planning to defend your thesis or dissertation. There is no cost to apply for graduation. Please check the [UA Little Rock Academic Calendar](#) to find the graduation application deadline for your particular semester under the General Dates heading. **You won't be able to graduate on time if you miss the application deadline.**

If you think there is any chance you will defend by the end of the semester, go ahead and submit the application even if you aren't 100% sure of your completion date. You can always reapply for graduation the following semester if needed.

For detailed instructions on how to submit your graduation application, visit <https://ualr.edu/records/apply-to-graduate/>. Be aware that graduation applications take several weeks to process, so your application status may show as “Pending” for most of the semester that you apply.

**If your graduation application is declined and you aren’t sure why**, you should first contact your program coordinator for more information. In rare cases, you may need to contact the dean’s office in your academic college:

- College of Business, Health, and Human Services (CBHHS)
- College of Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences, and Education (CHASSE)
- Donaghey College of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (DCSTEM)

The Graduate School does not approve or decline graduation applications, and our staff will not be able to answer questions about your graduation status.

**NOTE: If your graduation application is declined, you must reapply for graduation the following semester.** Graduation applications do not roll over from one semester to the next.

## THESIS OR DISSERTATION DEFENSE DEADLINES

You should work with your thesis or dissertation chair to establish a timeline for submitting drafts of your manuscript to your committee members. When the chair and all committee members agree that a draft of your manuscript is ready to defend, you may then discuss possible defense dates with your committee.

The date of your defense determines when you are eligible to graduate:

<b>Defense deadline</b>	<b>Semester of graduation</b>
December 1	Fall
May 1	Spring
August 1	Summer

**Note:** If one of these dates falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the defense deadline will be automatically extended to the following Monday.

If you defend after these deadlines, your graduation will be postponed to the following semester.

## COMPLETING THE FORMAT CHECK REQUIREMENT

As soon as possible after your defense, save your manuscript as a PDF and submit it to the Graduate School using our [Thesis and Dissertation Submission Form](#).

Our editors will then review your manuscript to verify that its formatting matches the requirements outlined in this guide.

**We must receive your manuscript no later than 5 pm on the date of the defense deadline (see previous page for specific dates).**

You will receive feedback from a formatting editor within 2 – 14 days of your submission. The closer it is to the deadline when you submit your manuscript, the likelier it is that it will take more days to receive your feedback, as our office may receive as many as 40 manuscripts during the week of a defense deadline.

If you submit your manuscript by the deadline, you will still be eligible to graduate, even if the feedback is returned to you after commencement takes place. **However, you will be unable to get your transcripts and diploma unless you complete all revisions requested by our editors and/or your committee chair.** You will have a Grad Thesis/Dissertation hold placed on your academic record until your finished manuscript is approved in the ProQuest Dissertation and Thesis Database.

## GETTING YOUR MANUSCRIPT APPROVED IN PROQUEST

After you receive formatting corrections from the Graduate School, make those corrections immediately, resave the document as a new PDF, and upload the revised PDF to the ProQuest Dissertation and Thesis Database. Uploading your manuscript to ProQuest makes your research available through any library that subscribes to the database.

**Use this link to start the ProQuest submission process:**

<https://www.etsadmin.com/main/schoolsList>

ProQuest will email the Graduate School to inform us when you have completed the upload.

- We will then check the uploaded PDF to ensure you made all the changes we required.
- We will also notify your committee chair, who will check the uploaded PDF to ensure you made all changes required by your committee.

**If you have not completed all the revisions**, we will send you one or more additional requests for revisions, and you will be unable to get your transcript or diploma until those revisions are approved.

**If you have successfully completed all required revisions**, we will send approval to ProQuest to publish your manuscript, and we will remove the hold on your transcripts and diploma.

Our office will email you when you have successfully completed the process and your Graduate Thesis/Dissertation hold has been removed. Official transcripts should be available and your diploma should be mailed to you 4-6 weeks after your hold is removed.

## **COPYRIGHT REGISTRATION**

**UA Little Rock does not require you to register your copyright** for your thesis or dissertation; all original works are automatically protected, even without registration. However, you may not be able to collect damages from someone who infringes on your copyright unless you have registered it with the Library of Congress.

You are allowed to register your copyright with the Library of Congress anytime within 5 years of completing your thesis or dissertation.

- You can register it through ProQuest when you upload your PDF for \$75.
- You can choose to register it yourself at <https://copyright.gov/> for \$35.

## **BINDING OPTIONS**

**UA Little Rock does not require you to have your thesis or dissertation bound** into a printed book format. If you want to have bound copies for your personal use, you are responsible for choosing the binding materials and paying for the binding on your own.

You may use any binding service that meets your needs. Below are a few popular options.

### **Online thesis and dissertation binding services:**

[Bachelor Print](#) (3-5 business days; free shipping)

[PHD Book Binding](#) (5-10 business days, depending on paper used and size)

[Wert Bookbinding](#) (4 weeks standard, 1 or 2 week rush shipping available)

[DB Bookbinders](#) (4 weeks, multiple binding options)

[Thesis On Demand](#) (cloth bound copies in 4 weeks, leather bound copies in 6 weeks)

**Note:** Some binderies may require you to use a larger left-hand margin for your PDF to leave room for binding. Increasing the size of the left margin will also cause your page numbers to change throughout the document.

**If you increase the size of the left margin, you will need to update the table of contents to make it accurate**, as well as any lists of figures or other lists in the front matter, before resaving the document as a PDF to submit it to the bindery.

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**If you have questions about these guidelines or want to set up an appointment (either in person or via Zoom) to get formatting assistance, please contact**

**Ms. Chloe Moses, MA**  
**UA Little Rock Graduate School**  
**Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Supervisor**  
[cdmoses@ualr.edu](mailto:cdmoses@ualr.edu)

You can also submit feedback using our online Google Form:  
[UA Little Rock Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Feedback](#)