THESIS PREPARATION HANDBOOK

Effective Spring 2014

a style and procedure guide for preparing and submitting theses

Dore' School of Graduate Studies and Extended Education

McNeese State University

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook is presented to assist graduate students in preparing theses for final submission to the Dore' School of Graduate Studies and Extended Education (referenced as "School" from this point forward) at McNeese State University. Herein, the conventions for all theses are presented. The School requires that all theses adhere to these standard formatting conventions while still permitting some variation from discipline to discipline. In general, the School extends to each discipline the privilege of determining most of the major sections of the work and, in some instances, the order of those sections; such instances are noted where applicable in this handbook.

Regardless of discipline, though, a thesis should demonstrate a student's capacity for creative expression; research; and/or organization, interpretation, and reporting of data in an acceptable, consistent style.

EXAMINING COMMITTEE

Membership

The thesis is created under the direction of an examining committee (referenced as "committee" form this point forward) of, typically, three graduate faculty members selected by the student and approved by the department head and executive director of the School. Committees may have additional members with approval.

In selecting committee members, a student first selects his/her major professor then consults with that individual to make selections of the other members.

Committee members must hold current graduate faculty status at the time they are appointed to the committee, and they must maintain that status for the duration they serve on the committee.

Should a faculty member lose his/her graduate faculty status for any reason, his/her appointments to all theses examining committees are revoked with notification at the time his/her status is lost. In such a case, the School's executive director will contact the student, department head, and major professor (unless the major professor is the faculty member in question) to assist in appointing a new committee member as soon as possible.

Duties

Major Professor

A student's major professor is expected to provide ongoing mentorship to the student during the duration of thesis preparation. The major professor should be a specialist in the student's specific field of study and hold a record of scholarship to reflect that specialization. As major professor,

he/she is considered the committee chairperson, facilitates necessary collaboration within the committee and between the committee and the student, and ensures that the student adheres to all necessary rules and regulations related to his/her topic.

Other Committee Members

The committee members who do not serve as major professor are expected to assist the major professor in whatever roles are necessary to mentor the student through the thesis preparation process.

RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Any research involving human subjects must be approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to initiating any type of data collection on human subjects. IRB procedures and forms are available online at http://www.mcneese.edu/hsirb. Once approved, the IRB chairperson will provide the student and/or major professor with written approval of the study. Students will be expected to provide this written approval to the School upon request. The School will not accept a thesis involving human subject research unless IRB approval was granted.

PROGRESS TOWARD THESIS COMPLETION

Students are expected to commit the effort needed to complete their theses within reasonable timeframes. While preparing the thesis, a student must enroll in “thesis hours” within his/her department. If a student does not complete the thesis during a given semester, a grade of “In Progress” (IP) will be assigned for that semester by the major professor, and the student must enroll in “thesis hours” again the subsequent semester. This protocol should be followed for each semester during which a student is preparing the thesis. Major professors are expected to submit proper requests to change the “IP” grade(s) once the thesis is approved and accepted and the student is eligible to graduate.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are expected to maintain the highest level of academic integrity. Academic integrity at McNeese State University is outlined in the Academic Integrity Policy, which is available online at http://www.mcneese.edu/integrity. Any act that involves the falsification effort violates this policy. Related to thesis preparation, this includes but is not limited to (1) using another person’s work of any kind without offering credit to that individual, (2) misrepresenting another person’s work even if proper credit is presented, or (3) falsifying data. No leniency will be granted if evidence demonstrates that a student is in violation of the Academic Integrity Policy.

FORMAT

Style

Differences among disciplines will be reflected among theses. Some disciplines conform publications to style guidelines provided by professional organizations or by professional publications. Such a practice is accepted and encouraged. However, if a conflict occurs between those guidelines and the requirements presented in this handbook, this handbook's requirements take precedence. The style adopted for a thesis must be consistent throughout the entire work.

Questions about style requirements should be directed to the major professor and/or the School.

Margins

Document margins shall be:

Left: 1.5"	Top: 1"
Right: 1"	Bottom: 1"

No element of the body (text, headings, captions, illustrations, etc.) may intrude into any margin. Page numbers, however, shall be placed within the bottom margin.

Widow/orphan controls should be activated in the word processing software used to create the thesis. A widow/orphan control will keep paragraph text together and prevent a single line of a paragraph from being isolated on a page. In general, this type of control by default is activated in word processing software.

Font and Spacing

The permitted font for all text within the thesis is Times New Roman. All text, including headings, body, references, page numbers, and table or figure captions, must be in 12 point font.

With the exception of selections on the title/signature page and within the abstract, the entire document must be double-spaced without any additional paragraph spacing before or after a paragraph. (Note: Some word processing software typically have a default setting of 10 points-worth of spacing after paragraphs. This setting must be changed from 10 to 0.)

The document text must be left-aligned, except for indentations, headings that may be center-aligned, or other elements like illustrations that may be aligned differently for visual appeal. Full-justified text formatting is not permitted.

Paragraphs within the body and reference entries must be indented .5" only. Headings within the table of contents may be indented more than .5" to show a hierarchical relationship among major

sections, headings, and sub-headings; however, indentations must be created in .5” increments. See the following example:

Acceptable Format

CHAPTER 1

Heading 1

Heading 2

Sub-heading 1

Sub-heading 2

Heading 3

Unacceptable Format

CHAPTER 1

Heading 1

Heading 2

Sub-heading 1

Sub-heading 2

Heading 3

Paper and Printing

Theses shall be laser printed on 8.5” x 11” print quality white paper. Inkjet-printed submissions are not accepted.

Double-sided printing is not permitted. Printing on only the front page of each sheet is required.

One complete copy must be printed on 20#, 25% cotton bond paper with watermark to be submitted to the School and archived at the Frazer Memorial Library. This copy must have original signatures on the title/signature page. The School requires only this single copy; academic departments have the right to request copies for departmental archives, and students are expected to contact their major professors regarding these departmental requirements. Students may order additional copies for personal use.

Illustrations

Symbols, charts, maps, graphs, music examples, etc., should be prepared in such a manner as to assure print-quality legibility. Pixelated or otherwise distorted illustrations are not acceptable. When at all possible, illustrations should be sized to fit within the document margins. Illustrations that must exceed the margins should be included as appendices and referenced within the body appropriately. Any illustration that exceeds 8.5” by 11” may be folded and bound in the thesis or placed in a pocket on the inside back cover; however, students are encouraged to avoid this if at all possible. Color illustrations are permissible.

Appearance

Each page of the document shall appear neat; formatted consistently within the page and among all other pages; and free of creases, folds, spots, smudges, or any other physical imperfection.

PAGINATION AND ELEMENTS

Page numbers should be inserted in the footer, centered and .5" inches from the bottom margin. On each page, on the numeral for that page should be used; the word "page" should not be used with the numeral nor should a format like "Page X of X" be used.

The thesis must be assembled in the following order. Theses for which some of the following elements are unrelated should adhere to the order but simply exclude inapplicable elements. However, students should make note of the elements marked with asterisks (*); these elements are required—regardless of discipline or thesis topic.

Order of Elements	*Pagination*
*Blank (1 page)	None
*Title and Signature (1 page)[1]	None
*Acknowledgements[2]	ii
*Abstract[3]	Roman numerals, in sequence after Acknowledgements
*Table of Contents[4]	Roman numerals, in sequence after Abstract
List of Tables	Roman numerals, in sequence after Table of Contents
List of Figures	Roman numerals, in sequence after List of Tables
Body	Arabic numerals, beginning with "1"
References	Arabic numerals, in sequence after body
Appendices[5]	Arabic numerals, in sequence after References

*Vita (1 page maximum)[6]	Arabic numerals, in sequence after Appendices
*Blank (1 page)	None

* Elements denoted with asterisks are required and must be presented in the order presented here.

[1] See Appendix 1. An editable .doc version is available for download on the School's Web site.

[2] The Acknowledgements' section should be used to pay respect to individuals who have been influential in the student's personal and/or professional pursuits. Acknowledging thesis committee members is customary and appreciated.

[3] The Abstract should be formatted per cataloging conventions (see Appendix 2) and, typically, does not exceed one page.

[4] The Table of Contents must include the titles and page numbers of the elements above except the blank page, Title and Signature page, and Table of Contents. It must also include all headings from within the body and the corresponding page numbers. Headings should be formatted with the same capitalization as in the body (see Appendix 3), and each section of the body should be labeled as a chapter with the appropriate number in the sequence of chapters. For each item in the Table of Contents, only the beginning page number is listed; no page ranges are used. Dot leaders should be used between each heading and the corresponding page numbers. Right tabs should be used for the page numbers to ensure a flush-right alignment.

[5] Appendices, if applicable, should be listed individually and labeled, in all caps, and with the word "Appendix" and Arabic numerals in sequence. The appendix title must also be included. See the following example:

APPENDIX 1: TITLE HERE IN ALL CAPS

[6] The Vita should present a brief biography of the student and should not exceed 300 words.

THESIS SUBMISSION, REVIEW, APPROVAL, ACCEPTANCE, AND BINDING

Once a thesis is complete, it is submitted for review and subsequent approval, acceptance, and binding.

A completed thesis is submitted to the committee for review and approval. Once approved, the thesis is submitted to the School for acceptance. *Approval by the committee* indicates that all committee members concur that the work is scholarly and substantive, meets departmental and School guidelines, and is representative of graduate-level study within the discipline. *Acceptance by the School's executive director* indicates that the committee's approval is validated, that all standard formatting requirements have been met, and that the document is ready for binding.

Step 1: Submission to Committee for Approval

The completed thesis—with the major professor's consent—is submitted to committee members for review. Students, however, should work closely with committee members throughout all stages of the thesis preparation; therefore, this submission should not be the first instance where committee members are exposed to the student's work. Approval of the thesis lies with the student's committee, and its defense becomes either part of the final comprehensive examination or serves as the examination.

Step 2: Submission to School for Acceptance

Once the thesis is defended, revised (if necessary), and the final draft is approved by the committee, the student must submit one copy, printed on standard paper, to the School for format review. Step 2 must be completed by the "thesis binding" date indicated in the academic calendar.

Step 3: Acceptance and/or Remission for Revision

The thesis will be reviewed for format, and a representative of the School will notify the student within one week of the submission whether format revisions are required. If no revisions are required, the student may prepare the copies for final approval and acceptance. If revisions are required, those will be described in an e-mail message to the student within five business days of the School receiving the thesis, and the student must make all revisions prior to preparing copies for final approval by the committee and acceptance by the School's executive director. Step 3 must be completed no less than five business days prior to commencement.

Step 4: Submission for Binding

All thesis copies for binding must be submitted to the School. These must include the two copies on bond paper for institutional archives plus any other copies the student wishes to be bound (see Paper and Printing section on p. 4). All copies must be submitted in a box with a piece of colored paper placed between each copy.

At this time, the student must place the binding order (see Appendix 4) and remit payment at the Cashier's Office for binding. Once bound, the copies will be shipped to the Frazar Memorial Library, and the School will notify the student when bound copies are ready for pickup.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Any questions related to the information presented in this handbook should be address to the School. Students and/or major professors are encouraged strongly to contact the School with questions *before* students begin preparing their theses to ensure that all parties understand the requirements fully from the beginning of the preparation process.

Doré School of Graduate Studies and Extended Education
P.O. Box 92180
Lake Charles, LA 70609
337.475.5394 (voice)
337.475.5397 (fax)
ptaylor@mcneese.edu
http://www.mcneese.edu/dore/graduate

APPENDIX 1: TITLE/SIGNATURE PAGE

THE THESIS TITLE IS INSERTED AT THE TOP OF THIS PAGE
IN ALL CAPS AND FORMATTED IN AN INVERTED
PYRAMID FASHION LIKE THIS EXAMPLE

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
McNeese State University
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the

Master of Arts in English

by
Regan Elizabeth Smith
B.A., Oklahoma State University, 2009
May 2013

APPROVED:

William Stevens, Ph.D., Chair
Assistant Professor of English

Marsha A. Adams, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of English

Allyson P. Tuder, Ph.D.
Professor of English

ACCEPTED:

Dustin M. Hebert, Ph.D.
Executive Director of Graduate Studies and
Extended Education

APPENDIX 2: ABSTRACT EXAMPLE

Smith, Regan E., B.A., Oklahoma State University, 2009
Master of Arts in English, Spring 2013
Title of Thesis: Thesis Title Here with Capital and Lowercase Letters
Thesis directed by: Associate Professor Marsha A. Adams
Pages in thesis, 49. Words in abstract, 402.

ABSTRACT

Abstract text begins here and is formatted with the same font, spacing, and other formatting requirements as the body of the document.

APPENDIX 3: TABLE OF CONTENTS EXAMPLE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ii

ABSTRACT iii

LIST OF TABLES 2

LIST OF FIGURES 3

HEADING 1 4

Sub-heading 1 4

Sub-heading 2 5

HEADING 2 7

HEADING 3 9

HEADING 4 10

Sub-heading 1 13

REFERENCES 20

APPENDIX 1: TITLE HERE 22

APPENDIX 2: TITLE HERE 23

VITA 24

APPENDIX 4: THESIS BINDING ORDER FORM

Thesis Binding Order Form

DATE:

STUDENT NAME:

STUDENT ID#:

THESIS TITLE:

Copies	Quantity	Cost	Total
Frazar Memorial Library	2	$10.00	$20.00
Additional copies		$10.00	
TOTALS			

TO BE COMPLETED BY CASHIER'S OFFICE

Date: _____ Amount paid: $_____ Receipt #: _____

After payment, return this form to the Doré School of Graduate Studies and Extended Education. Your binding order will not be processed until then.