

Tips for Ensuring a Quick Review of Your Thesis or Dissertation

The review process for theses and dissertations parallels the peer review process for journals, and the goal is an error-free, readable, professional looking document you can be proud of.

preparation and submission in the appropriate format	You will follow the style required by your discipline; it may be a standard style: APA, MLA, Turabian/Chicago; it may be a style required for a particular journal.
review and approval for appropriate content	Your committee, and in particular your advisor, will be reading for content and may have suggestions based on that reading and on your defense.
reviewing for style and format before publication	The Graduate School has several thesis readers who will check style and format; the readers are NOT responsible for editing a poorly written/formatted document; large amounts of editing at this stage can result in graduation being delayed until a later term.

So how can you avoid problems with the Graduate School review?

(1) Read the thesis/dissertation manual!!! Regardless of the style you will use, the front matter is standard. A few things that will vary depending on when you finish:

- The signature page needs to have your committee members, department chair and the graduate school dean at the time of your defense. Check to be sure you have the correct spelling of the correct names. As of 2007-08, the Dean is Dr. Edelma D. Huntley, Research and Graduate Studies.
- The date you will use is the month and year of your graduation, which may not be the same as your defense month. The only months that should be used are May, August or December. There is no comma between the month and year because you do not list the day.
- Don't forget to put a vita, curriculum vitae, or biographical sketch at the end of your document. It is appropriate to mention that you "received" your Master of Arts, Education Specialist, Doctor of Education, etc., as though you had completed your degree already. By the time the thesis/dissertation is "published" you will have!

(2) Find out at the very beginning of your literature review what format you need to follow. If your advisor does not have a particular format in mind, we suggest following APA style. It is the most commonly acceptable for submission to journals.

(3) Right from the start when doing your literature review, properly format a reference for *everything* you read according to the required format and put it into a word processed list – this list will become your bibliography.

(4) Be careful and consistent! Here is a list of things to check:

- Headers or subheaders are formatted the same way throughout.
- Page numbers are in proper order, the page numbers in the table of contents are correct, and page numbers are consistently located on the page.
- The table of contents, list of figures, and list of tables have the headers worded the same way as the headers in the text.
- The titles for figures or tables are consistently located, all above or all below; figure or table numbers are in the proper order.
- The citations are formatted correctly, and all of the cited references are in the bibliography. The bibliography references are formatted according to the required format.
- Noun – pronoun, and noun – verb pairs match.
- Mathematical/statistical variables are in italics; "data" is used as a plural noun (use data set if you want a singular noun). We strongly encourage you to use a math typesetting tool such as equation editor in MS Word for all math symbols; the software follows the rules for using italics.
- Punctuation is appropriate: Periods fall inside closing quotes; there are no run-on sentences; all lists of more than two items have a comma before the "and" (or no lists have a comma before the "and").

(5) Plan ahead! You need to turn in a well formatted, complete, defended copy of your document to the Graduate School 10 calendar days before the last class day (not the last day of finals). Leave some time to make any modifications suggested by your committee; 7 days is suggested. As a result, try to arrange your defense 17 days before the last class day in the term.