University of Missouri–St. Louis College of Education

Dissertation Handbook: The Recommended Organization and Format of Doctoral Dissertations
2014

Note: This handbook only addresses formatting standards. It should not be considered an inclusive set of writing standards. The intention here is to give dissertations a College-wide standard appearance. Information on appropriate writing style for a dissertation can be found elsewhere (see the list of references).
General Formatting

The Graduate Education Committee of the College of Education established these guidelines to promote a College-wide standard. They are intended to present a consistent organization for a document that is made publicly available.

Documentation Styles

The College of Education doctoral students write dissertations over a broad range of sub-disciplinary fields. The College does not dictate a single documentation style but rather recommends using a style preferred within a student’s sub-discipline.

In the absence of another preferred style, students should use the current American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines. No matter which style is selected, the style guidelines should be applied consistently throughout the dissertation.

General Formatting Specifications

Margins. For binding and copying purposes, every page of the dissertation must have at minimum 1-inch margins at the top right and bottom with a 1 ½-inch margin on the left (binding) edge. Larger margins are acceptable. Page numbers should be at least ½ inch from the edge of a page.

Font Style and Size. A recommended standard for font style and size is 12 point Times New Roman, but any similar font and size is acceptable for the body of the text. Students should avoid fonts that are script, italic, or ornamental throughout. Once a font is selected it should be used consistently throughout the dissertation.

Line Spacing. The body of the text, abstract, and acknowledgments must be double-spaced or one-and-one-half spaced. Long quotations, footnotes, endnotes, lists, and appendices may be single-spaced. Whatever spacing is chosen it should be used consistently throughout the dissertation. We recommend you don’t add extra space between paragraph – that adds up over a long dissertation to make a dissertation more pages than necessary.

Pagination. Every page of the dissertation should be numbered except for the notice of copyright page, if included, title page, and committee approval page. Page numbers should appear in the same location on each page and be a consistent font style and size.
The preliminary pages should be numbered in lowercase Roman numerals with the first page of text beginning Arabic numerals, starting with ‘1’.

Paper. If the dissertation is submitted in paper form, 20-pound standard grade white paper, 8 ½” by 11” should be used.

Print Quality. Dissertation copies should be of high quality. Any unclear or illegible pages might be rejected and will have to be replaced.

Color Copies. Color copies are acceptable but to accommodate black-and-white copying labels or symbols rather than colors should identify lines on graphs. Crosshatching might be a better choice for the purpose of copying than color.

CDs and Other Non-Print Media. Compact discs can be included with the dissertation but students should assure that the dissertation is understandable without the material on the CD. CDs should be marked with your name, degree, College of Education, University, and dissertation title. If the CD contains information specifically placed in the dissertation, that information should be given as well. For example, you might label the CD “Appendix B: Transcriptions of Interviews”.

Long Dissertations. Be aware that long dissertations (over 500 pages or 2 ½ inches) might have to be separated into two volumes.

### Organization of the Dissertation

The general sequence of the dissertation should be: preliminary pages, text pages, and reference/appendix pages.

**Preliminary Pages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Pagination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title Page*</td>
<td>Counts as page i, but number does not appear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee Approval Page</td>
<td>Counts as page ii, but number does not appear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract*</td>
<td>Numbered as page iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>Numbered as page iv if included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>Numbered as page v if included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents*</td>
<td>Continue Roman numbering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>Continue Roman numbering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>Continue Roman numbering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Illustrations</td>
<td>Continue Roman numbering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Symbols</td>
<td>Continue Roman numbering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Abbreviations</td>
<td>Continue Roman numbering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>Continue Roman numbering</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Title Page. The title page for a print dissertation should be formatted according to the directions below and the model in Appendix A.

1. The title of your dissertation should be typed in Title Case and fall between 2 and 2 ½ inches from the top of the page. It should be centered.
2. Your name and previous degrees (corresponding to official University records) should follow below and be centered, about 4 inches from the top of the page. The format for degrees should be: degree abbreviation, institution, year granted. Use one line for each degree.
3. The following should appear about an inch below your last degree, centered:

   A Dissertation Submitted to The Graduate School at the
   University of Missouri – St. Louis in partial fulfillment of the requirements
   for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Education with an emphasis in <insert your
   emphasis area>

   Month, Year

4. Click on “Align Text Right” about an inch below month and year. Type “Advisory Committee” and then double space and type the name and degree of your chairperson with the word “Chairperson” below his/her name. Double space again and list the name and degree of a second committee person, and so on.
5. Toward the bottom of the page and centered type: Copyright, <your name>, year

Abstract. An abstract is a short summary of your dissertation. It should state the problem, describe the methods used, and provide the main results or conclusions of your study. It is usually less than 350 words. The line spacing of the abstract and the font style and size should be consistent with the body of the dissertation. The heading should be consistent with chapter headings.

Dedication. Students sometime like to dedicate their dissertation to a friend, parent, or mentor. Including a dedication is optional. You do NOT need to label the page “Dedication” but your text should be centered vertically and horizontally.

Acknowledgments. An acknowledgments page is also optional. Use the heading “Acknowledgments” and the same font style and size and spacing that is used in the body of the dissertation.

Table of Contents. A Table of Contents is required. It should list all of the major sections that follow, including chapters, appendices, lists of tables and of figures. You
have the option of listing subsections for chapters and appendices, but if you list them for one chapter you should list them for all chapters.

The font style and size, capitalization, and wording of all chapters and sections or subsections of chapters in the table of contents should match that in the text. Use left justification for major entries and indent subsections. Use leader dots and right justify the page numbers. See the example in the appendix.

Lists of Tables, Figures, Symbols, and/or Abbreviations. You are not required to have these lists, but any you have should use a consistent format from one to the next and with the table of contents. If tables or figures from one chapter are listed, then tables and figures from all chapters should be listed. The title or caption used in the list should match that in the text.

Text

The text should be divided into chapter or sections.

Headings. Heading and subheadings should be consistent throughout the chapters and sections in regard to capitalization, placement on the page, font style, and font size. A common format is to center the heading for a chapter followed by an Arabic numeral. If the word “chapter” is capitalized, so should the chapter title.

All major sections should begin on a new page but subsections do not need to begin a new page. If the heading of a section or subsection falls near the bottom of a page, at least one line of text should follow it or it should be placed at the top of the following page.

Tables, figures, photographs, and musical examples. The arrangement of figures within the dissertation should be decided with your advisor. It is often easier to place figures in a subsection at the end of a chapter or section than to place them next to text, especially if figures are not large enough to require a whole page. Figures, figure numbers, and captions should be placed on the same page, either vertically or horizontally, within the required margins. If a figure is rotated horizontally, the top of the figure should be toward the left edge. The figure caption is also rotated, but the not the page number.

Writing style. Scientific writing is used for a dissertation. It is the language used to communicate something for the first time. Day (1988) identifies four characteristics of good scientific writing:

• Scientific writing is characterized by absolute clarity: an author of clear mind undertakes a clearly stated problem and draws clearly stated conclusions
• Scientific writing is understandable: a message is lost unless it is clearly understood by the intended audience
• Scientific writing uses **words of certain meaning**: writing should be as clear and simple as possible, well-ordered, and avoid literary embellishments and idiomatic expressions

• Scientific writing is characterized by proper use of English: when English is the language of the dissertation, the English language should be used with precision.

Tense. Naturally, much of a dissertation proposal should be written in the future tense. It is a plan for how to proceed with a research study. The review of literature, though, should conform to the convention of scientific writing that follows.

As a matter of scientific ethics, once a scientific paper is published in a primary journal it becomes knowledge. Fittingly, that work is respected by citing it in **present tense**. When you quote or discuss published work, use the present tense. Your own work should be discussed in **past tense** because it is not yet published and not yet presumed to be established knowledge (Day, 1988). In your dissertation, then, you will go back and forth between the past and present tenses. Generally you will write most of the abstract, methods, and results in the past tense but the introduction, review of literature, and discussion in the present knowledge in the present tense since they emphasize previously established knowledge.

Voice. Active voice is typically more precise and less words than passive voice. You should avoid using the passive voice. It is acceptable to say “I found” in place of “It was found.”

**Reference Section**

The list of references and the appendices should continue the Arabic numbering from the text. The list of references is not considered a chapter and should not have a chapter number. Citations should not be carried over from one page to another. Appendices can only appear at the end of the dissertation (not at the end of a chapter) and they should be labeled as A, B, C, etc.

**References**

Appendix A. Sample Title Page (box just represents the paper edges)

The Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Project Sample Title Page

Please B. Done
B.S.Ed., Southwest Northern University, 1994
M.Ed., University of the Small College, 1998

A Dissertation Submitted to The Graduate School at the
University of Missouri – St. Louis in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education
with an emphasis in <your emphasis area>

August, 2014

Advisory Committee

Was Really Nice, Ph.D.
Chairperson

Even More Help, Ed.D.

Hardly Saw Him, Ph.D.

Knows His Numbers, Ed.D.

Copyright, your name, 2014
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<td>65</td>
</tr>
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<td>2  Anxiety Levels During Data Collection</td>
<td>67</td>
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<tr>
<td>3  Anxiety Levels on Defense Day</td>
<td>70</td>
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