UNIVERSITY STYLE GUIDE
FOR THE FORMATTING OF THESES AND DISSERTATIONS

College of Graduate Studies
Middle Tennessee State University
Revised September 2019 by Britt Young
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Table of Contents

LIST OF FIGURES ........................................................................................................................................... iv

CHAPTER I: GENERAL INFORMATION ........................................................................................................... 1
  Purpose of the Guide ................................................................. 1
  Role of the Editor ........................................................................ 1
  Role of the Advisory Committee ..................................................... 2
  Forming the Advisory Committee .................................................. 2
  General Policies ........................................................................... 3
  Student Integrity ........................................................................... 3
  IRB and IACUC Approval ............................................................... 4

CHAPTER II: ORGANIZING AND FORMATTING THESES & DISSERTATIONS .................................................. 5
  Font Type & Size ......................................................................... 5
  Margins ....................................................................................... 5
  Pagination ................................................................................... 5
  Spacing ....................................................................................... 6
  Miscellaneous Items ..................................................................... 6
  Consistency is Key ....................................................................... 6

CHAPTER III: UNIVERSITY STYLE ................................................................................................................ 7
  About Prefatory Pages ................................................................. 7
    Title Page ................................................................................. 7
    Dedication Page ........................................................................ 7
    Acknowledgements Page ............................................................ 8
  Abstract ..................................................................................... 8
  Table of Contents ........................................................................ 8
  List of Symbols/Abbreviations/Terms .............................................. 8
  Body Text ................................................................................... 9
    Tables/ Figures ........................................................................... 9
    Footnotes and Endnotes .............................................................. 10
  Reference Section ........................................................................ 10
  Appendices ................................................................................ 10
CHAPTER IV: ARTICLE-STYLE THESIS AND DISSERTATIONS

General Information ................................................................. 12
Copyright Information ............................................................ 13
Formatting Article-Style Theses or Dissertations ....................... 13
Prefatory Pages ....................................................................... 13
Table of Contents .................................................................... 13
Lists ....................................................................................... 13
Main Body ............................................................................. 13
Reference Section ................................................................. 14
Appendices ............................................................................ 14

CHAPTER V: DEFENSE & SUBMISSION PROCEDURES ....................... 15
Defense ................................................................................ 15
Required Paperwork ............................................................. 15
Submission ............................................................................ 16
  Deadlines ........................................................................ 16
  Extensions ....................................................................... 16
  Submission Procedure ...................................................... 17
  Processing Time .............................................................. 17
Timeline for Completion ....................................................... 18

APPENDICES ........................................................................ 19
APPENDIX A: TITLE PAGE TEMPLATE .................................... 20
APPENDIX B: APPROVAL PAGE TEMPLATE ............................. 21
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Flowchart depicting a typical timeline for paper planning and submission deadlines.................18
CHAPTER I: GENERAL INFORMATION

The mission of the College of Graduate Studies at Middle Tennessee State University is to enhance the scholarly experience of all graduate students and to help students achieve their academic goals while maintaining academic standards. To this end, one of the roles of the College of Graduate Studies is to evaluate the scholarly content of theses and dissertations that are submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduate degrees awarded by Middle Tennessee State University. This is an important function of the College of Graduate Studies; therefore, the dean of the College of Graduate Studies has the final approval authority for each thesis and dissertation. The dean may have an editor who examines each thesis and dissertation and approves them by proxy.

Purpose of the Guide

This guide is intended to serve as a stylebook for thesis and dissertation preparation at Middle Tennessee State University. It includes information regarding the guidelines to which all students writing theses or dissertations must conform. While students are expected to write their thesis or dissertation in the style preferred by their academic discipline (APA for Psychology, MLA for English, etc.), some uniformity for all theses and dissertations is expected: therefore, where something within the preferred style conflicts with university style, university style takes precedent.

Role of the Editor

The editor may suggest changes to enhance the overall academic quality of a thesis or dissertation. If a thesis or dissertation does not meet the academic standards expected of Middle Tennessee State University graduate students, the editor will notify the student and committee chair so they may address the changes that are required.
The editor processes all the paperwork required for the thesis or dissertation and can answer general questions about the thesis or dissertation process. They are responsible for communicating with the student throughout the editing process and for serving as the dean’s proxy to grant final approval. The editor secures the dean’s signature on the approval page after final approval has been granted and changes the student’s records to verify all requirements have been fulfilled so the degree may be conferred.

While the editor reviews papers to ensure they meet the university style outlined in this manual, they do not edit papers for content or grammar. The College of Graduate Studies recommends that students have their papers edited prior to submission.

Role of the Advisory Committee

The student’s committee oversees the entire writing process and advises the student on content. They determine whether an article-style dissertation is appropriate. Primary academic responsibility and authority resides with the graduate faculty, particularly the committee chair and any other committee member.

Forming the Advisory Committee

Students must file an Advisory Committee form to establish their committee before they begin research. Committee members must be part of the graduate faculty at MTSU. Students may have up to five committee members, but the total number required should be determined at the programmatic level, in consultation with their chair.

Students may elect to have an external member sit on their committee. An external member is someone who is an expert in their field of research but is not employed by MTSU. This external member must still have graduate faculty status at MTSU.
The committee chair must hold a doctoral degree in the discipline and teach in a doctoral degree-granting department or in an interdisciplinary doctoral program at MTSU. They must also be a member of the graduate faculty and be recommended to chair the committee by the graduate program director. Individual programs may apply different standards by vote of the faculty of the program if they are equivalent or more stringent and are approved by the Graduate Council and the dean of the College of Graduate Studies.

Since course release credit is granted to chairs, only one person may serve as the committee chair. The College of Graduate Studies does not recognize co-chairs. If an Advisory Committee form is submitted with co-chairs, it will be rejected. Students who designate co-chairs on their finished publication will be asked to select one of the members as the sole chair.

The graduate program director must approve the formation of the Advisory Committee and is responsible for verifying that all members have graduate faculty status.

General Policies

All graduate students must follow all policies as they are outlined by their respective graduate catalog.

Student Integrity

Middle Tennessee State University strives to promote values and attitudes that are reflective of solid academic character and integrity. Academic integrity is an essential component of a quality education. When a student participates in behavior that can be considered academic misconduct, the scholarly value of their education is lessened.

All members of a university community have responsibility for ensuring academic integrity. Faculty have the responsibility to report suspected violations via the Student Academic Integrity Incident
Report, found on the above policy page. Students have the responsibility of doing their own work and giving credit where credit is due. **This means students must correctly cite other works and correctly craft references that meet their academic style manual’s guidelines.**

Please see Policy 312 – Academic Misconduct, which can be found on the Policies section of the MTSU website, for more information about student integrity.

**IRB and IACUC Approval**

The Office of Compliance has a mission to enhance compliance consciousness for MTSU’s workforce and student research by promoting the highest standards of ethics and integrity through awareness, education, monitoring, oversight, and appropriate responses to violations. Through this enhanced consciousness, compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and university policies is achieved. The Office of Compliance furthers the mission of ethical research at MTSU by fostering a culture of ethical research in collaboration with the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) and Environmental Health and Safety Services.

The Office of Compliance facilitates the interactions between the researchers and the concerned Institutional oversight committee, namely Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Review the Office of Compliance website to determine whether IRB or IACUC approval is needed. Letters of approval must appear in the appendices section.
CHAPTER II: ORGANIZING AND FORMATTING THESES & DISSERTATIONS

Font Type & Size

Font type and size are elements that greatly affect the appearance of the thesis or dissertation. To ensure the document is in a format that promotes readability, select a suitable, clear font. The College of Graduate Studies recommends Times New Roman, Calibri, or Helvetica. The standard size for paragraphs is 12pt. Headings may appear slightly larger, but do not exceed 14pt.

Margins

Set the margins as follows:

- Left margin: 1.5 inches
- Top margin: 1.25 inches
- Right margin: 1 inch
- Bottom margin: 1 inch

This applies to all pages within the thesis or dissertation. All material included within the document, such as tables, figures, appendices, etc. must adhere to these margin settings.

Pagination

All pages will have a visible number on them except for the title page, which is counted but not numbered. Prefatory pages (all pages before the body of the document) must be numbered with lowercase Roman numerals (ii, iii, iv, etc.) that are centered one inch from the bottom of the page. All pages in the body of the document, beginning with CHAPTER I, must be numbered with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.) that appear one inch from the upper right-hand corner of the page.
Spacing

All text must be double-spaced. Triple spacing is required before and after tables and figures that are inserted between lines of text. Table data, long quotations (40 words or 4 lines or more when indented), and references in the reference section may be single-spaced.

Avoid widows (when a paragraph carries over only one line to the top of the next page) and orphans (when a heading or subheading falls at the bottom of a page and is not followed by text).

All ellipses ( . . . ) must have spacing between the dots, even when they appear within the reference section.

You must put a space before an equal sign ( =), less than sign ( <), and greater than sign ( >).

Miscellaneous Items

- Chapter headings must appear in all capital letters and with Roman numerals, as they do within this document (ie: CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION, CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW).
- Italicize all statistical expressions.
- Always use the percentage symbol (%) when preceded by a number.

Consistency is Key

For ease of readability, as well as to assist in the visual appeal of the document, ensure that formats, spacings, headings, etc. remain consistent. Do not randomly change fonts or sizing within the document!
CHAPTER III: UNIVERSITY STYLE

About Prefatory Pages

Prefatory pages are those that precede the body text. These pages (Title Page, Dedication, Acknowledgements, and Abstract) are not be listed on the Table of Contents. However, lists must be included: List of Tables, List of Figures, List of Appendices, etc. Prefatory pages must be numbered with lowercase Roman numerals, with the page number appearing centered at the bottom of the page. They must be arranged within the document in the order they are listed in this chapter.

Title Page

The Title Page counts as page “i” of the document, but it is not numbered. Because it is not numbered, the next preliminary page must be numbered “ii.” All text on the Title Page must be centered. The following information must appear, in this order:

- Final title of the thesis/dissertation
- The student’s degree title
- The university name
- The month and year of graduation

Refer to APPENDIX A: TITLE PAGE TEMPLATE when formatting the Title Page.

Dedication Page

This page is optional. Students wishing to dedicate the thesis or dissertation to someone may do so using this page. This page does not include a heading, and the text should be brief and centered on the page. Pagination is centered, in lowercase Roman numerals.
Acknowledgements Page

This page is optional and can be used to include brief statements of appreciation or recognition. This page has the heading “ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS,” and the heading must be centered and written in all capital letters. Pagination is centered, in lowercase Roman numerals.

Abstract

Every thesis or dissertation is required to include an abstract. This should be approximately 350 words for dissertations and 150 words for theses. The student and the committee will determine the content of the abstract. The page must be titled “ABSTRACT,” and the heading must be centered and written in all capital letters. Pagination is centered, in lowercase Roman numerals.

Table of Contents

Every thesis or dissertation is required to include a Table of Contents. The page must be titled “TABLE OF CONTENTS,” and the heading must be centered and written in all capital letters. All headings, sections, chapters, and the first set of subheadings must be listed within the Table of Contents. Prefatory pages are not listed on the Table of Contents. Pagination is centered, in lowercase Roman numerals. Do not include an entry for the Table of Contents on the Table of Contents page.

Refer to the Table of Contents in this document to use as a template for formatting purposes.

List of Symbols/Abbreviations/Terms

Students who need to include a list of symbols, abbreviations or terms can create a separate page with these listings. The title of the page should indicate its content. This page should follow the List of Figures/Tables and come after the Table of Contents. Pagination is centered, in lowercase Roman numerals. Include an entry for this page on the Table of Contents.
Body Text

The format of the thesis or dissertation must be logical and consistent. Major divisions within the text must be chapters or subheadings. These divisions must conform to guidelines indicated in the style manual that the student is using.

Tables/Figures

Theses or dissertations that include tables or figures must include a List of Tables and/or a List of Figures. These pages are located toward the beginning of the document, after the Table of Contents and before the body of the document. The titles for the tables/figures on these pages must match exactly the titles of the tables/figures themselves in the text. Pagination is centered, in lowercase Roman numerals. Refer to the List of Figures in this document to use as a template for formatting purposes.

Tables and figures must be formatted according to the style manual (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.) the student is using. For dissertations, tables and figures must be incorporated into the body text after they are referenced. For theses, students may incorporate them into the body text, or they may attach them in their appendices.

Tables must be identified in the text by Arabic number. The table number and title must be typed above the table. If a table continues onto another page, repeat the table number and column heading at the top of each page.

Figures must be identified in the text by Arabic number. The figure number and caption must be typed below the figure.

If the tables or figures continue onto another page, repeat the table number and column heading at the top of each page.
Footnotes and Endnotes

All footnotes must begin on the page where they are cited. At the beginning of each chapter, footnotes start over with the Arabic number 1.

The student should consult the discipline-specific style manual they are using for information on how to create and format footnotes and endnotes.

Reference Section

The reference section must be labeled as per the discipline-specific style manual guide the student is using – ie: REFERENCES for APA, WORKS CITED for MLA, BIBLIOGRAPHY for Chicago, etc. Center the title at the top of the page, just like the chapter titles.

Entries within the references section cannot carry over to another page. If the entire entry is too long to fit on the page, space it so it moves to the next page.

The references section must be formatted according to the discipline-specific style manual guide the student is using. The College of Graduate Studies editor will check the references against that style guide to verify accuracy in formatting.

Appendices

Appendices are an optional section that are not always part of a thesis or dissertation. They are used to incorporate additional, supplementary matter, such as the IRB approval letter, charts, diagrams, tables, or material that could not be suitably included within the body of the thesis or dissertation.

If a student chooses to include an appendix or appendices, they must incorporate a cover sheet for the section with the heading APPENDIX (or APPENDICES if there is more than one item). This sheet is counted and numbered, and the page numbers continue through the appendices. Each appendix that is included within the appendices is labeled with a letter (Appendix A, Appendix B, etc). All appendices,
including the cover sheet, must be listed in the Table of Contents. Refer to the APPENDICES in this document to use as a template for formatting purposes.
CHAPTER IV: ARTICLE-STYLE THESES AND DISSERTATIONS

General Information

This approach is intended for students whose final, completed thesis or dissertation will consist of a number (minimum of two) journal-style manuscripts or articles. This is an option available only to students in certain fields whose graduate faculty have determined it to be an appropriate option. This is at the discretion of the program director.

Article-style theses or dissertations must be based upon research completed while the student is enrolled at Middle Tennessee State University. For each article used, the student must be the first author, or equivalent, as defined by the discipline.

The thesis or dissertation must be the student’s original idea. It must be a unified work that includes a sequence of articles of publishable quality around a theme and a comprehensive review of the literature that demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the unifying framework.

Students must include an introductory section to describe the studies, tell how they are related, and explain their significance. Connecting language should bridge each study to the next. There will also be a section that serves as a summary, making clear the importance of the studies, integrating the major findings, and discussing the implications for the overall topic.

All parts of the thesis or dissertation must conform to the provisions set forth within this manual, except when the circumstances of a specific project require deviation. Students considering this approach should contact the College of Graduate Studies before beginning their work if they have any questions concerning specific problems or deviations from traditional procedures.
Copyright Information

The inclusion of any articles that are previously published or accepted for publication requires permission from the copyright holder.

Formatting Article-Style Theses or Dissertations

Just like with regular dissertations, students must select a discipline-specific style guide whose provisions must be applied to the manuscript. When individual articles have been prepared for or accepted by journals for publication, and the articles have been prepared using the style guide issued by the journal(s), the student must inform the College of Graduate Studies which style guide they used. The overall dissertation must also be revised as necessary to conform with this university style manual.

Prefatory Pages

Follow the same layout and format as for a regular dissertation.

Table of Contents

Each article included should be identified in the Table of Contents as a separate section by giving the complete title as it appears on each manuscript. List all second-level headings and their corresponding page numbers (it is not necessary to list third-level headings).

Lists

Tables and figures shall be listed for the whole document. List all abbreviations as one complete list.

Main Body

The introduction must include a clear statement of the student’s purpose or hypothesis to be tested. It provides necessary background information and a broad statement summarizing the findings of the study. This section also will include a statement of the relationship between and among the
various articles and parts of the research. Contain each article as its own chapter and include a references section and appendices. The final chapter must state the conclusions for the manuscript as a whole.

**Reference Section**

All general references from the introduction, overall conclusion, and any supplementary sections should be included here and must conform to the same style and format as the articles.

**Appendices**

Any appendices that relate to the manuscript as a whole must be included here.
CHAPTER V: DEFENSE & SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

Defense

The student must successfully defend their thesis or dissertation before it can be submitted for final approval to the College of Graduate Studies.

In consultation with the other committee members, the committee chair will schedule the defense of the thesis or dissertation. This defense is open to all members of the university community who wish to attend. It is administered by the committee according to program guidelines. All members of the committee must sign an approval page signifying the successful defense of the thesis or dissertation.

Required Paperwork

At different steps of the writing process, the College of Graduate Studies requires certain paperwork to track the student’s progress. The following forms, all found on the College of Graduate Studies website, must be submitted before the student can graduate:

- **Advisory Committee form.** This officially forms the student’s thesis or dissertation advisory committee. All members of the committee must have graduate faculty status, even external members (faculty who are not employed by MTSU). The committee chair must hold a doctoral degree in the field of study. This form must be submitted to the College of Graduate Studies before research is conducted.

- **Intent to Graduate form.** This triggers the College of Graduate Studies to begin the degree evaluation process for the student. It must be filed within the semester the student plans to graduate. See the Academic Calendar on the College of Graduate Studies website for specific deadlines.
• Approval Page. This is the form that the committee signs at the defense, signifying the student has passed. It must be submitted to the College of Graduate Studies at the same time the thesis or dissertation is deposited in ProQuest. Do not include a copy of this page within the thesis or dissertation.

• Publishing Agreement. This form grants MTSU and its agents the non-exclusive right to archive and make accessible the thesis or dissertation. It must be submitted to the College of Graduate Studies at the same time the document is deposited in ProQuest.

• Survey of Earned Doctorates. Doctoral students are required to submit the Survey of Earned Doctorates to the National Science Foundation at the same time the document is deposited in ProQuest. SED notifies the College of Graduate Studies that the student has submitted the survey.

Submission

Deadlines

Theses and dissertations may be submitted at any time during the semester of graduation up to the deadline posted on the Academic Calendar on the College of Graduate Studies website.

Extensions

Formerly, requests for extensions were considered, and there was an official "extension deadline" posted on the calendar. However, there have been so many extension requests that the College of Graduate Studies has decided to simply extend the deadline for all students. All deadlines have been pushed back to grant the students more time. Therefore, it is no longer necessary to request an extension. Extensions will not be granted.
Submission Procedure

Follow the steps on the ProQuest website (www.etdadmin.com/mtsu) to submit a thesis or dissertation. Once it has been submitted to the website, and the approval page has been submitted to the College of Graduate Studies, the editor will review the document.

After review, the student will receive an email regarding the status of his or her thesis or dissertation (“Approved” or “Revisions Needed”). If approved, no further action is required from the student, and the thesis/dissertation will be delivered to ProQuest after graduation. If revisions are needed, the student will be notified of the revisions via email. The student must make the changes and resubmit the document.

It is not unusual for several rounds of edits to occur before the editor grants final approval and the dean of the College of Graduate Studies signs the approval page.

Processing Time

Keep in mind that theses and dissertations are processed in the order in which they are received. Expected graduates who submit their thesis or dissertation closer to the deadline may experience a delay in their degree approval by the editor, availability of transcripts and receipt of their diplomas.

Students who submit their thesis or dissertation after the deadline but before commencement will not have their diplomas conferred until the following term, but they will not have to enroll in additional thesis/dissertation hours for the term in which they graduate.
Figure 1. Flowchart depicting a typical timeline for planning and submission deadlines.
APPENDICES
HORCRUXES: DEFEATING YOU-KNOW-WHO, A CASE STUDY

by

Harry J. Potter

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of English

Middle Tennessee State University
August 2019

Dissertation Committee:
Dr. Albus Dumbledore, Chair
Dr. Minerva McGonagall
Dr. Filius Flitwick
Dr. Pomona Sprout
HORCRUXES: DEFEATING YOU-KNOW-WHO, A CASE STUDY

Harry J. Potter

Date of Defense

Approved:

________________________________________
Dr. Albus Dumbledore, Chair

________________________________________
Dr. Minerva McGonagall

________________________________________
Dr. Filius Flitwick

________________________________________
Dr. Pomona Sprout

________________________________________
Dean of the College of Graduate Studies